

December 20, 2020

To: The Honorable Kim Reynolds, Governor
Members of the Iowa General Assembly

From: Chad Jensen, MA, LMSW
Chairman
Iowa Commission on Tobacco Use Prevention and Control

Re: 2020 Annual Report of the Iowa Commission on Tobacco Use Prevention and Control

Pursuant to Iowa Code section 142A.4, I am pleased to submit to you this annual report of the Commission on Tobacco Use Prevention and Control for 2020. The Commission and our community partners take seriously the challenge of reducing the negative impacts of tobacco and nicotine use among Iowans. We appreciate the support of our accomplishments you and other leaders have shown and look forward to working with you on the important tobacco and nicotine control goals of our commission.

The intent of the legislative charge for Iowa's tobacco use prevention and control initiatives, as outlined in Iowa Code chapter 142A, are summarized below:

1. To establish partnerships among the Executive Branch, General Assembly, communities and the people of Iowa in addressing the prevalence of tobacco use in the state,
2. To work toward reduction in tobacco use by youth and pregnant women, while also engaging youth actively in attainment of these results, and
3. To foster a social and legal climate in which tobacco use becomes undesirable and socially unacceptable.

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in Iowa and the United States. Consider the following statistics and recent trends:

- In 2018, 24.0% of 11th grade students were current users of tobacco or vaping (e-cigarette) products compared to 14.7% in 2016 (includes having used cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco, e-cigarettes and/or water pipes/hookah in the past 30 days).¹
- Among 2018 11th grade users of tobacco and/or vaping products, 97.4% report having ever tried e-cigarettes or vaping products.
- E-cigarette use among 11th grade students rose from 9.1% in 2016 to 22.4% in 2018²

¹ Iowa Department of Public Health. Division of Tobacco Use Prevention and Control. *Iowa Youth Tobacco Use Rates: Iowa Youth Survey—2018, Trends 1999-2018*. Des Moines: Iowa Dept. of Public Health, 2019. <https://idph.iowa.gov/tupac/statistics>.

² 2018 Iowa Youth Survey. Available at http://www.iowayouthsurvey.iowa.gov/images/2018_State/IYS%202018%20State%20Report.pdf

- In Iowa, an estimated 1,800 cancer deaths each year are attributable to cigarette smoking³

Accomplishments of the Commission on Tobacco Use Prevention and Control and the IDPH Tobacco Division during 2020 include:

- [Allocation table for Community Partnerships for FY20](#); all 99 counties have local tobacco control work taking place
- [Map of FY20 Community Partnerships](#)
- [Community Partnership Policy databases](#)
- Commission on Tobacco Use Prevention and Control [2019-2023 Strategic Plan](#)
 - The Commission's five-year plan places emphasis on nicotine addiction, the health risks of vaping and the increased teen use of electronic smoking devices.
 - The Commission recognizes that tobacco means cigarettes, vapor devices and other tobacco products.
- The passage of T21
 - The Commission commends you for signing legislation which increased the state minimum age to purchase tobacco, alternative nicotine and vapor products from 18 to 21 years. State of Iowa law is now reflective of the federal minimum age to purchase which was raised on December 20, 2019.

The work of the Commission and Tobacco Division, as well as the ongoing provision of Quitline Iowa cessation services available to all Iowans is a valuable and essential asset for the state during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic.

- The pandemic has underscored the importance of ongoing tobacco use prevention and control as smoking and vaping negatively impact lung health by both increasing the risk of developing respiratory infections and decreasing the body's ability to recover from them.
- For those who may turn to smoking or vaping as a way to deal with the uncertainty, isolation, and anxiety that has come with COVID-19, the free one-on-one phone counseling and access to quit smoking medications available through Quitline Iowa remains a helpful resource to Iowans who want to quit and need support for coping with stress and withdrawal.
- In FY20, the Quitline Iowa service provider, National Jewish Health, created and released a youth tobacco cessation program called [My Life, My Quit](#) for youth aged 13-17. The program combines best practices for cessation of youth tobacco and vaping, including tailored resources and educational materials for quitting, and coaching services by phone, text or online chat. The Tobacco Division created a [tool kit for](#)

³ Lortet-Tieulent, J, et al., State-Level Cancer Mortality Attributable to Cigarette Smoking in the US, *JAMA Intern Med.* 2016

[schools](#), and is working with schools to promote its use as an alternative to suspension when students are caught with tobacco and vapor products on school grounds

Policy databases and Smoke Free Homes Registry

- Policy databases indicate:
 - The number of schools districts with tobacco free/ nicotine free (TF/NF) policies **increased** from 285 in FY16 to 401 in FY20;
 - A **27% increase in TF/NF parks/recreation areas** (from 90 in FY18 to 114 in FY20).
 - An **84% increase in TF/NF businesses** (from 735 in FY18 to 1,351 in FY20);
- Over 1,295 rental properties in Iowa have a voluntary smoke free policy listed in the [Smoke Free Homes Registry](#), a 26% increase from 1,027 in FY17 when data collection began to FY20. (Note this reflects properties not units)

In 2021, the Commission on Tobacco Use Prevention and Control recommends state policymakers focus on the following priorities:

- Include e-cigarettes under the Iowa Smokefree Air Act.
- Tax alternative nicotine and vaping products at their cigarette equivalent and increase the cigarette excise tax.
- Begin regulating and lowering the concentration of nicotine in e-cigarettes and ban the sale of all flavored nicotine vaping products in Iowa.
- Restore state funding for tobacco and nicotine prevention, education and treatment to a total of \$12 million annually.

The Commission looks forward to working with your office as well as the Iowa Statehouse to address tobacco and nicotine control issues, as well as the vaping epidemic.

Sincerely,



Chad Jensen, MA, LMSW
Chairman

Iowa Commission on Tobacco Use Prevention and Control