



Monday, March 19, 2018

The Honorable Linda F. R. Omobien
Chairwoman
Health and Social Service Committee
Akron City Council
166 South High Street
Akron, Ohio 44308

Dear Chairwoman Omobien, members of the Health and Social Service Committee, and members of Akron City Council:

Please accept this letter as indication of Akron Children's Hospital's support for the Tobacco 21 ordinance, currently under consideration. This ordinance would raise the legal minimum age for the sale of all tobacco and nicotine products within the city of Akron to age 21. Thus far, over 160 cities in 12 states including New York City, Kansas City, Chicago, Cleveland, Columbus, Boston, San Francisco, and the entire states of Hawaii and California have taken this important step to protect their children.

Akron Children's Hospital was founded 128 years ago on the principles of community service and providing care in response to the health needs of the children and families we are privileged to serve. From our perspective, there is no question that tobacco usage, in its several forms, negatively impacts several health issues we are actively working to address including chronic disease, and maternal and infant health.

Youthful experimentation with tobacco between the ages of 18 to 21 often accelerates into daily use. Those years are also a time when the adolescent brain is highly vulnerable to the effects of a powerful addictive agent like nicotine. Exposure during this period may result in permanent neurological receptor changes that can lead to a lifetime nicotine habit and its resulting illnesses. Raising the nicotine/tobacco age also better protects younger teens, as 90% of those who provide cigarettes to kids 18 and under are themselves under the age of 21. Raising the tobacco sales age to 21 has been shown to reduce high school smoking by more than 50%. Further, many smokers under age 21 are also parents. Their tobacco use carries a higher risk of infant mortality as well as second-hand-smoke exposure concerns for their children.

We encourage Akron City Council to pass the Tobacco 21 ordinance to greatly improve the health of our children, young people and community.

Respectfully,

A blue ink signature of Dr. Norman Christopher, written in a cursive style.

Dr. Norman Christopher, M.D.
Chairman, Department of Pediatrics

A blue ink signature of P. Cooper White, written in a cursive style.

P. Cooper White, M.D.
Director, Locust Pediatrics