



Minneapolis Youth Congress Tobacco Initiative: Summary Report

Investigation and Deliberative Process

Data Collection- MYC developed a survey and collected responses from over 70 youth (under 18) in the community. The survey captured information and preferences from youth that have already begun experimenting with tobacco. Key findings include:

- 40% of youth surveyed initiated tobacco use before age 14.
- Cigarillos, Shisha (hookah) and E-cigarettes are almost as popular as cigarettes.
- 27% of respondents said “taste” or “flavor” was the main quality they like about their tobacco product.
- Almost 20% of youth report their most common way of getting tobacco is buying it directly from the store.
- 63% of youth surveyed know a place that sells single cigarettes (“loosies”).

Youth Engagement- The MYC hosted a community forum and attended four youth events to share survey findings and host discussions on what can be done to address tobacco issues.

Tobacco Expert Engagement- The MYC invited and met with tobacco experts from The Association of Non-Smokers of Minnesota, the Minneapolis Health Department, and the Public Health Law Center of William Mitchell College to gain insight on tobacco issues and share their recommendations.

Main Issues

Flavor and Price: Cigarillos, Shisha, and E-cigarettes come in a variety of flavors that mimic popular candy products. Cigarillos are also extremely cheap, 89 cents for a single cigarillo. This is a strong combination to attract youth to the habit.

New Unknown Products: E-cigarettes have grown in popularity, but health concerns remain unanswered. E-cigarettes contain addictive nicotine and initial studies show the presence of carcinogens. E-cigarettes may be harmful to use, may also serve gateway to traditional tobacco products and the vapor emissions may pose a risk to others.

Access and Compliance: Too many youth are able to easily access tobacco products. Youth have shared stories of being able to purchase “loosies” and cigarillos directly from stores with their pocket change.

Four Recommendations

1. Clean Indoor Air laws (state and local) should prohibit e-cigarette use in all of the same places that cigarette smoking is prohibited.
2. Minimum pack-size and minimum pricing on tobacco items such as little cigars and cigarillos.
3. Flavor tobacco products should only be sold by tobacco-only retailers.
4. No coupons or discounts should be allowed for tobacco products.