



King County Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHB)

The Chinook Building, 401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 0400, Seattle, WA 98104

**KING COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD
RESOLUTION SUPPORTING RAISING THE LEGAL SALES AGE FOR
TOBACCO AND VAPOR PRODUCTS FROM 18 TO 21**

WHEREAS tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death in the United States killing over half a million U. S. citizens and more than 8,300 Washingtonians each year—more than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, murders, and suicides combined—and causing cancer, heart disease, and respiratory diseases, among other health disorders, that add an estimated \$2.81 billion in annual health care costs in Washington alone;

WHEREAS, in 2014, the number of Washington 10th graders using either cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, or electronic cigarettes was 20 out of 100;

WHEREAS in 2015 the Institute of Medicine (IOM) concluded that raising the legal sales age for tobacco products to 21 would reduce tobacco initiation among youth, especially those aged 15-17, improve health across the lifespan, and save lives;

WHEREAS, the IOM projected that if the legal sales age for tobacco products were raised to 21 nationwide, there would be approximately 223,000 fewer premature deaths, 50,000 fewer deaths from lung cancer, and 4.2 million fewer years of life lost for persons born in the US between 2000 and 2019, and result in near-immediate reductions in preterm births, low birth weight babies, and sudden infant death syndrome;

WHEREAS raising the legal sales age for alcohol to 21 is associated with reduced alcohol use and dependence among persons under 21;

WHEREAS raising the legal sales age for tobacco from 18 to 21 will help lead to less smoking and tobacco use among Washington teens aged 12-17, sparing these young people from the ravages that develop over time from harmful and highly addictive tobacco products;

WHEREAS legislation to raise the legal sales age for tobacco and vapor products from 18 to 21 has been introduced in the Washington State Legislature but has not yet been enacted;

WHEREAS The King County Behavioral Health Advisory Board is a voluntary board created by the Legislature to advise King County regarding policies and services related to mental health and substance use disorders;

WHEREAS the King County Behavioral Health Advisory Board wants to protect the young people of our county from the ravages of tobacco and nicotine addiction;

THEREFORE the King County Behavioral Health Advisory Board calls upon the Washington State Legislature and all elected officials in King County to support raising the legal sales age for tobacco and vapor products from 18 to 21.

RESOLVED this 4th day of August, 2016.

Pat Godfrey
Board Chair
King County Behavioral Health Advisory Board