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NEW YORK'S COUNTY HEALTH OFFICIALS (NYSACHO) STATEMENT ON GOVERNOR CUOMO'S PROPOSAL TO RAISE THE AGE OF SALE ON TOBACCO AND E-CIGARETTE PRODUCTS TO 21

(Albany, New York. January 12, 2019) New York's County Health Officials and 58 local health departments commend the Governor's intention to raise the age of tobacco sales and e-cigarettes from 18 to 21 years of age. The State of New York has long been a national leader in the fight against tobacco and the Governor's announcement today further demonstrates the State's commitment to public health policy that is aimed to protect communities, families and youth from exposure to tobacco products.

"Raising the legal tobacco purchase age to 21 will protect thousands of New Yorker's from disease and death caused by tobacco use," said NYSACHO President Paul Pettit, who also serves as Public Health Director for Genesee and Orleans County Health Departments. "County Health Officials stand in alignment with the Governor today as he announces his plans for statewide adoption of Tobacco 21".

According to the US Surgeon General, tobacco use is one of the most important sources of preventable illness and premature death. National data indicates that 95 percent of adult smokers begin smoking before the age of 21, and changing from an experimental smoker to a regular smoker typically occurs around age 20.

Additionally, a 2015 Institute of Medicine report projected that if the age of purchase is raised to 21, there would be substantial reductions in mortality from smoking, immediate improvements in the health of adolescents, reduced exposure to second-hand smoke and improvements to maternal and child health.

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