



Proviso Communities Make Strides Toward a Healthier Future with Passage of Tobacco 21 in Illinois

The Proviso Partners for Health (PP4H) Tobacco-Free Living Hub is excited to share fantastic news! On Sunday, April 7, 2019, Governor J.B. Pritzker made an important stride toward a healthier future for Illinois as he signed a bill into law that raises the age to purchase tobacco products in the state from 18 to 21 years old. The law will go into effect on July 1. PP4H and members of its Tobacco-Free Living Hub want to extend a special thanks to Rep. Camille Lilly who sponsored the bill and Senator Julie Morrison who championed the statewide Tobacco 21 legislation.

The passage of Tobacco 21 in Maywood in May 2017 contributed to the momentum of local Tobacco 21 policies in Cook County and, ultimately, to the statewide adoption of Tobacco 21. The PP4H Tobacco-Free Living Hub would like to thank everyone who called, emailed, or visited their elected officials at every level. It's because of your hard work and commitment to a healthier community that this law successfully passed. PP4H looks forward to supporting communities in Proviso Township to implement this new policy.

The Hub is especially grateful to students who are part of Proviso West High School's Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) club, who are leaders in promoting anti-smoking and school wellness. In November, two students from the Proviso West SADD club testified at the Cook County Board of Commissioners meeting in support of Tobacco 21 legislation. Cook County has since adopted Tobacco 21 legislation that covers unincorporated Cook County; the new state legislation will expand this to include all of Cook County.

Tobacco 21 laws are important because 95% of adult smokers take up the habit before they turn 21. By raising the purchase age from 18 to 21, this new law will help keep tobacco out of schools and away from teens. The law will also yield significant health and economic benefits, as the Institute of Medicine estimates that raising the tobacco purchase age to 21 could result in a 12% decrease in smoking rates by the time today's teenagers become adults.

Respiratory Health Association estimates statewide Tobacco 21 legislation in Illinois will save the lives of more than 24,000 children alive today who otherwise would have died from tobacco-related illness. In addition, the newly adopted policy will save \$500 million in future healthcare costs and avoid \$500 million more in lost productivity associated with smoking and tobacco related illnesses.