

## **Transylvania County Board of Health**

### **Protecting Our Youth from Nicotine, Cannabis Products, and other Licit Substances**

WHEREAS, the community served by Transylvania County has experienced a growing number of smoke shops that sell nicotine, cannabis, and other intoxicating products; and

WHEREAS, the proliferation of smoke shops would result in an undesirable impacts to the community, including increased potential for minors to be exposed to and therefore use nicotine, cannabis, and other intoxicating products; adverse health consequences of using these products; and heightened risk of negative aesthetic impacts, blight, and loss of property values of residential neighborhoods and businesses in close proximity to such uses;

WHEREAS; Transylvania County has witnessed an increase in youth vaping devices that contain both nicotine and THC,

WHEREAS, nicotine and cannabis is harmful to developing brains, and its use during adolescence can disrupt the formation of brain circuits that control attention, learning, and susceptibility to addiction; and

WHEREAS, most North Carolina young people obtain nicotine and cannabis products from retailers. North Carolina young people who get e-cigarettes from friends primarily get them from friends who are under 21; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, Congress increased the federal minimum legal sales age of all nicotine products, including e-cigarettes, from 18 to 21. While a majority of states (42 states, as of September 2024) have increased their minimum nicotine sales age to 21 to match federal law, North Carolina's minimum sales age remains 18<sup>8</sup>; and

WHEREAS, all 24 states with legalized recreational cannabis prohibit purchase by persons under age 21;

WHEREAS, having the same legal sales age at 21 for all nicotine, cannabis, and other licit products reduces the burden on retailers; and

WHEREAS, Emergency Department visits for THC ingestion in North Carolina have increased six-hundred percent (600%) among children under 18 and have increased one thousand percent (1000%) among teens since 2020;

WHEREAS, edible products containing THC and other intoxicating substances are packaged so they appear similar to popular children's snacks;

WHEREAS, North Carolina is capable of implementing an efficient and effective tobacco, cannabis, and licit substance retailer permitting system based on the system already in place for alcohol retailer permitting; and

WHEREAS, establishing a retailer permitting system AND raising the minimum legal sale age to 21 will:

- Allow the state to know where cannabis, tobacco, and other licit substances are being sold
- Improve merchant education efforts
- Regulate packaging to require labeling containing an analysis of ingredients, child-resistant packaging, and prohibiting packaging which is attractive to children and youth
- Allow the state to inspect for responsible retail practices
- Protect law-abiding retailers by holding non-compliant retailers accountable
- Prevent and reduce youth use of highly addictive products
- Help eliminate the use of nicotine, cannabis, and other emerging intoxicating products amongst youth
- Reduce any confusion among retailers and consumers by having one legal sales age for state and federal law; and

WHEREAS, current NC state law G.S. 14-313 preempts local authority to adopt regulations regarding the sale, distribution, display and promotion of tobacco products. The state has the authority to resolve this problem to protect minors ; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOVED, that the Transylvania County Board of Health supports legislative changes for North Carolina to protect our children and youth from addiction to nicotine, cannabis, and other intoxicating products by establishing a retailer permitting system and establishing a minimum age of sales to 21.

Adopted and approved this the 10<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2025



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Dr. Ben Lamm  
Chair  
Board of Health