

Dear Senator:

The Massachusetts Dental Society (MDS) asks you to support SB 1218 and HB 2864, An Act to protect youth from the health risks of tobacco and nicotine addiction. This legislation seeks to reduce tobacco use and nicotine addiction among youth, which will improve health, save lives, and reduce health care costs.

Tobacco is a priority issue for the MDS due to the significant oral health complications caused by smoking and, especially, smokeless tobacco products.

Specifically, SB 1218 and HB 2864 would:

- Raise the age of sale for tobacco from 18 to 21;
- Regulate E-cigarettes and add them to the Commonwealth's smoke free workplace law; and
- Ban the sale of tobacco in healthcare facilities such as pharmacies.

Dozens of communities across Massachusetts have adopted these policies, and large percentages of our state's population are already covered by them. It is time for Massachusetts to close the gap and ensure protections for all young people in the Commonwealth.

Despite recent gains, tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable illness and premature death in Massachusetts, and the tobacco problem is far from solved:

- Tobacco use costs Massachusetts and our residents more than \$4 billion annually in health care costs.
- 95% of adult smokers began smoking before the age of 21.
- Nicotine has harmful structural and chemical impacts on the developing brain and may lead to future alcohol and other drug addiction, panic attacks, and depression.
- The tobacco industry is changing and innovating, introducing new products and marketing strategies that appeal to youth.

Massachusetts has made great progress in reducing rates of youth cigarette smoking, but the wave of new addictive tobacco and nicotine products targeted at youth requires us to respond in new ways to protect our young people.

The MDS urges your support of SB 1218 and HB 2864.

Sincerely,



David P. Lustbader, DMD
President
Massachusetts Dental Society