



Public Health
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Greene County Public Health

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Press Release

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Tobacco 21 Takes Effect Across Ohio

GREENE COUNTY, OHIO – Greene County Public Health is informing Greene County residents of a new tobacco law going into effect on October 17th, 2019. In July 2019, Governor Mike DeWine signed an updated state budget which changed the age to purchase tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes from 18 to 21. *As of October 17th, these harmful products will no longer be sold to any person under the age of 21.*

The sale of cigarettes, other tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, alternative nicotine products, or papers used to roll cigarettes to any person under twenty-one is now prohibited. In addition, all retailers of tobacco and nicotine products are required to post a sign in a conspicuous place stating the new legal purchase age of 21. The required sign is available online at www.OhioTobacco21.gov.

Greene County Public Health, as well as local law enforcement and the Ohio Department of Health, will work with all retailers within Greene County limits to ensure compliance. However, tobacco and nicotine retailers that do not comply with the Tobacco 21 ordinance risk citations.

The goal of Tobacco 21 is to reduce the rates of tobacco and nicotine usage among young people to improve health and save lives. Nearly all adult smokers began smoking by the age of 18 and less than 5% of adult smokers start smoking after age 21. Nicotine and e-cigarettes are especially harmful to young people, who are more prone to addiction. Nationwide, we know that vaping prevalence increased by 38% between 2017 and 2018. If left unchecked, the vaping epidemic will ensure that another generation of Ohioans will suffer the often-deadly consequences of tobacco use and nicotine addiction.

Community support is strong for the Tobacco 21 initiative. Over 75 percent of persons surveyed in Greene County agreed that the age to buy tobacco products including e-cigarettes should be raised to twenty-one. Nationwide surveys showed the same result at 75 percent. Ohio joins 17 other states and Washington, D.C. that have already passed state-wide Tobacco 21 laws. Raising the legal age to 21 has been shown to reduce high school smoking rates by over 50% by putting access outside the social circle of most high school students. For more information, please visit www.OhioTobacco21.gov.

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If a teenager in your life wants help quitting, there are resources. *My Life, My Quit* at www.my lifemyquit.com/ is a free & confidential service for teens under 18 who want help quitting all forms of tobacco, including vaping. Teens will participate in five one-on-one coaching sessions, where a coach helps teens develop a quit plan, identify triggers, practice refusal skills and receive ongoing support for changing behaviors. This program is available via phone calls, text messaging, or online chat.

If you know a pregnant woman who needs help quitting tobacco, they can enroll in the Baby and Me Tobacco Free program through GCPH. Mothers (and partners) who stay smoke free after the baby is born can receive monthly vouchers for free diapers for up to 12 months. Call Nancy at 937-374-5679 for more information.

Another option for help kicking tobacco is Ohio's Tobacco Outline. All Ohioans are now eligible for this free service. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW for personalized quit coaching and free nicotine replacement therapy after your first four sessions or log onto <https://ohio.quitlogix.org/>.

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