KING COUNTY
Signature Report
February 23, 2015
Resolution 15-04

Proposed No. 15-04.1

Sponsors

1. A RESOLUTION calling on the Washington state
   Legislature to increase the legal age for a person to be sold
   or given, or to purchase, attempt to purchase, or possess,
   tobacco products or vapor products, from eighteen to
   twenty-one years old.

WHEREAS, smoking is the leading preventable cause of death and
7. disease in the United States according to the U.S. Surgeon General, and
8. WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
9. cigarette smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke cause over 480,000 deaths
10. annually in the United States, including from cancer and respiratory and vascular
11. disease, and
12. WHEREAS, the U.S. Surgeon General notes that smoking by youth and
13. young adults can cause serious and potentially deadly health issues immediately
14. and into adulthood, including placing young people in danger of addiction to
15. nicotine, reduced lung function, reduced lung growth and early cardiovascular
16. damage, and
17. WHEREAS, exposure to nicotine can have lasting effects on adolescent
18. brain development, and
WHEREAS, statewide there are about 49,000 youth currently using tobacco, with about forty youth starting smoking each day in Washington state, and

WHEREAS, according to the 2012 Washington state healthy youth survey, youth who use tobacco are more likely to use multiple substances, such as marijuana or alcohol, and among tenth graders in Washington state who use tobacco, about half use multiple types, like cigars or chewing tobacco, along with cigarettes, and,

WHEREAS, historically, cigarettes have been the most popular tobacco product used by youth. By grade twelve, over one-third of grade twelve students report having ever smoked a cigarette, and

WHEREAS, 2012 Washington state healthy youth survey data show that twenty-three percent of twelfth graders and thirteen percent of tenth graders in King County reported using tobacco in the last thirty days, and

WHEREAS, 2012 Washington state healthy youth survey data show that eighty-six percent of tenth graders in King County who smoke report their usual source of tobacco being from a social or other source, not from buying it themselves in a retail outlet, and

WHEREAS, the Washington state Department of Health also notes that the earlier youth begin smoking cigarettes, the more likely they are to become strongly addicted to nicotine. Delaying the age when young people first experiment with or begin using tobacco can reduce the risk that they will become addicted smokers, and
WHEREAS, national data show that ninety-five percent of adult smokers begin smoking before they turn twenty-one. The ages of eighteen to twenty-one are also a critical period when many smokers move from experimental smoking to regular, daily use. While nearly half of adult smokers become daily smokers before age eighteen, four out of five do so before they turn twenty-one, and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 5494 and House Bill 1458, introduced this year at the request of Washington state Attorney General Bob Ferguson, would increase the smoking age for tobacco and vapor products from eighteen to twenty-one years old, in recognition of the damage of tobacco to lives of Washington state residents, particularly youth, and the enormous health care costs, $2.8 billion, directly attributed to tobacco use in the state;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Health of King County:

The Board of Health calls upon the Washington state Legislature to increase the legal age for a person to be sold or given, or to purchase, attempt to
purchase, or possess, tobacco products or vapor products, from eighteen to twenty-one years old.

Resolution 15-04 was introduced on and passed by the Board of Health on 2/19/2015, by the following vote:

Yes: 9 - Ms. Clark, Mr. Baker, Dr. Danielson, Mr. McDermott, Ms. Wales, Mr. Dembowski and Dr. Delecki
No: 0
Excused: 3 - Ms. Lambert, Mr. Licata and Ms. Sawant

BOARD OF HEALTH
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Joe McDermott, Chair

ATTEST:

Anne Noris, Clerk of the Board

Attachments: None