



**American
Heart
Association.**

2021 Minnesota State and Local Policy Priorities

Our mission: To be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives.

♥ **TOBACCO**

○ **FLAVORED TOBACCO PRODUCTS**

AHA supports legislation that restricts the sale of all flavored tobacco products including menthol at both the state and local level.

Flavored tobacco is one of the primary ways the tobacco industry is appealing to youth and have long marketed menthol tobacco products to African Americans, the LGBTQ community, and others. Flavored products serve as a way to get youth addicted and create lifelong customer for the tobacco industry.

○ **INCREASE THE PRICE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS**

AHA supports legislation that increases the price of all tobacco products.

Increases in the price of tobacco products lead to substantial reductions in tobacco use for both youth and adults. Tax revenue can be used to fund comprehensive tobacco control and prevention programs, cover the cost of cessation, and improve access to healthcare. As the American Heart Association works to end tobacco and nicotine addiction, it is imperative that tobacco tax revenue be dedicated to programs and services to help people quit and keep kids from ever starting.

♥ **REDUCING SUGARY DRINK CONSUMPTION**

○ **HEALTHY KIDS' MEALS**

AHA supports legislation that make healthier sides and beverages the default options in kids' meals.

Sugary drinks are the leading source of added sugar in the American diet. The average child consumes 30 gallons of sugary drinks every year—enough to fill a bathtub. If we don't reduce these trends, 40% of children are likely to develop type 2 diabetes in their lifetime, which makes them twice as likely to develop and die from cardiovascular disease as adults. Making water and milk the default beverage options along with healthy sides for kids' meals at restaurants will promote healthier beverage options and help reduce sugary drink consumption.

○ **WATER BOTTLE REFILLING STATIONS**

Enact a policy ensuring all newly constructed schools and schools undergoing major renovations have bottle filling stations.

Sugary drinks contribute to poor diet, diabetes, and rising obesity rates, yet water intake remains insufficient among many children and adults. Promoting water consumption may be an effective way for communities to decrease sugary drink consumption. When water is available from non-fountain sources such as water coolers, the percentage of students who drink water increases.

♥ **ACCESS TO CARE**

AHA advocates for policies that support health care access and coverage for individuals living with or at risk of cardiovascular disease and stroke.

AHA's positions include but are not limited to prohibiting discrimination in coverage for pre-existing conditions, opposing the extension of short-term limited duration health plans, and supporting the continuation of the Palliative Care Advisory Council.

To learn more, please contact Jess Nolan, Government Relations Director
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