Background on Tobacco Use

• Leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death in the United States.

• Every day, nearly 2,100 young people under the age of 21 become daily cigarette smokers.

• Nicotine is highly addictive and the adolescent brain is more susceptible to it.
Why Raise the Age?
Most Smokers Start Before Age 21

• 95% of adult smokers **began** smoking before they turned 21.

• Many experimental smokers **transition** to regular use during the ages of 18-21.

• About 3 out of 4 teen smokers **continue** smoking into adulthood.
Why Raise the Age?

Nicotine Is Addictive

- The adolescent brain is **more susceptible** to nicotine because teens are still going through critical periods of growth and development. Their brains simply aren’t fully developed. Nicotine use is shown to stunt the growth and development of the brain.

- Using nicotine can **rewire** the teenage brain to become more easily addicted to other drugs.
Why Raise the Age?

• Older youth smokers (18-20 years) are a major supplier of cigarettes for younger teens who rely on friends and classmates to buy them.
  – 63% of 9th -12th graders had given money to someone of legal age (19 years or older) to purchase cigarettes for them.

• As 18-19 year olds are in high school or still hang out with kids who are, this means younger teens have daily contact with students who can legally purchase tobacco.
Increasing the Sale Age to 21
A Public Health Solution

• Delay age of first tobacco use and reduce risk of becoming regular smoker.
• Help keep tobacco products out of schools.
• Younger teens have harder time passing themselves off as 21.
• Reduce smoking-caused deaths
Why Raise the Age?

Only 2% of tobacco sold is purchased by 18-20 year olds, but that group supplies 90% of the addictive tobacco to younger people.
E-cigarettes

• An **epidemic** of e-cigarette use among teenagers.

• **81% of youth** who tried e-cigarettes started with a flavored e-cigarette.

• Tobacco companies market smokeless tobacco, little cigars and electronic cigarettes in **youth-friendly flavors** like cotton candy, gummy bear, cherry, Captain Crunch, and watermelon.
Tobacco Use and Teens

Source: CDC "Vital Signs: Tobacco Product Use Among Middle and High School Students — United States, 2011–2018"
Tobacco Use and Teens

19 Not the age of majority for everything...

- Drink or purchase alcohol
- Gamble in casinos
- Obtain concealed weapon permit
- Rent a car
- Check into a hotel
- Foster/adopt a child
Where is T21 already in place?

425+ Cities & Counties in 25 States

99,243,391+ Americans covered
Needham Case History

Needham vs. Metro West High School Smoking Rates

Decreases noted on graph are % change between that year and 2006
Utah County Leaders Survey Results

City Council and Mayors from 21 Utah County Cities responded to our Tobacco 21 survey that asked the question:

“How supportive are you of increasing the minimum purchasing age of tobacco from 19 to 21 in order to reduce tobacco use among youth?”

83.7% Responded Favorably
Enforcement

• Led by Utah County Health Dept.

• As directed by State Code, local health departments currently work in conjunction with local law enforcement to conduct compliance checks throughout each year

• When conducted in Lehi City, these compliance checks would just check for under age 21 sales
T21 Implementation

- Tobacco Retailer Education
- Community Education
- Other Municipalities Education
- Evaluation
COMMON CLAIMS AGAINST T21
TOBACCO 21 WILL CAUSE CONVENIENCE STORES TO GO OUT OF BUSINESS
Adolescents and young adults between ages 18 and 20 account for only two percent of tobacco sales while making up 90% of the supply to underage teen smokers.

In contrast, $300 billion is spent each year on health care and lost worker productivity costs related to tobacco use.
YOUNG ADULTS WILL JUST “WALK ACROSS THE STREET” TO PURCHASE TOBACCO LEGALLY
Information from cities that have already passed Tobacco 21 indicates that young adults are less likely to leave their existing social circles to seek out a retailer where they could legally purchase tobacco.
PEOPLE ARE CONSIDERED ADULTS AT 18 OR 19
19 is not considered the age of majority for many things, including: drinking alcohol, gambling, obtaining a concealed weapon permit, renting a car, checking into a hotel or adopting a child.
IF SOMEONE IS OLD ENOUGH TO JOIN THE MILITARY, THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO BUY CIGARETTES
Tobacco and the Military

• Tobacco takes a toll on troop readiness and places a financial burden on the military health care system.

• Military leaders are actively taking steps to reduce tobacco use.

“Tobacco impairs reaction time and judgment. It stands in the way of a Marines number one priority; to be in top physical and mental shape – combat ready.”

- General Robert Magnus, Assistant Commander of the Marine Corps
Smoking is not allowed during basic training. Tobacco takes a toll on troop readiness and places a financial burden on the military health care system.

Military leaders are actively taking steps to reduce tobacco use.
TOBACCO COMPANIES WILL OPPOSE TOBACCO 21 HOWEVER THEY CAN
Altria, the owner of Philip Morris USA and part-owner of JUUL Labs released this statement February 11, 2019:

“Kids shouldn’t use any tobacco products and we share the FDA’s concerns with youth use of e-vapor. We remain committed to being part of the solution.

Raising the legal age of purchase for all tobacco products to 21, which we strongly support, is the single most effective way to address underage use.”

(emphasis added)
Thank you. Any Questions?
• Marc.Watterson@heart.org