

New Zoning Law for Corner Stores Will Help Curb Tobacco use in Rochester

Smoking & Health Action Coalition Commends City Council

Rochester, N.Y., September 20, 2012 -- The Smoking and Health Action Coalition of Monroe County (SHAC) today commended the Rochester City Council for taking a positive stand in support of public health by prohibiting new corner stores from opening within 500 feet of one another in residential neighborhoods. The Coalition says the change in zoning will greatly impact city neighborhoods by curbing tobacco sales in a city where there are already 350 tobacco retailers. The Coalition estimates there are as many as 580 tobacco retailers in Monroe County.

"The more licensed tobacco retailers there are, the greater the access our young people have to tobacco and the more likely they are to obtain and use tobacco products," said Mary Judge, Coalition Director at SHAC. "Reducing retail tobacco outlet density is a viable policy for preventing youth smoking."

According to a report *Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults* issued by the U.S. Surgeon General earlier this year, nearly all first use of cigarettes occurs by 18 years of age (88%) and 99% of first use by 26 years of age. The report also concluded that "advertising and promotional activities by tobacco companies have been shown to cause the onset and continuation of smoking among adolescents and young adults."

"If we can prevent kids from ever starting to smoke we will save lives and prevent lung disease," said Jeff Seyler, President and CEO of the American Lung Association of the Northeast. "We know that the more tobacco advertising our kids see, the more likely they are to smoke. This new zoning law will help moderate some of that and our kids will be the beneficiaries."

The zoning change was passed by the City Council on September 19

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