

From "Jason Belmonte" <jbelmonte@doverma.gov>
To "Buzby; Maureen" <mbuzby@cityofmelrose.org>
Date 2025-10-28 22:19:09+00:00
Subject Re: BOH Public Hearing Monday, November, 3, 2025

Thanks for sharing Maureen. I will add this to the records so we can make sure it is shared!

Jason Belmonte, R.S, CHO, CP-FS
Health Director
Town of Dover, MA
603-285-2915

On Tue, Oct 28, 2025 at 5:21 PM 'Buzby, Maureen' via BOH Emails <boh@doverma.gov> wrote:

October 28, 2025

Dover Board of Health
Town of Dover
5 Springdale Ave.
Dover, MA 02030

Dear Board of Health Members:

In the event I don't have an opportunity to speak at the public hearing Monday evening, I'm sending my planned remarks so you will have them for your record:

Thank you for this opportunity to speak today.

I am the Regional Tobacco Prevention Program Manager for seven Northeast communities. I've been inspecting stores and conducting compliance checks for fourteen years. I've watched the evolution from pink and purple foil-wrapped flavored cigarillos that look like candy, to Juul devices that look like flash drives, to high-content, cheap, discrete oral pouches, to vapes that look just like highlighters, and pens that actually write **and** vape! And now even newer vape devices – a teddy bear, a toy guitar, a CD that plays music while you vape. Or play Mario Bros. while vaping.

I learned recently that there are even newer devices that can track your use - when, how often, how much you puff, and the nicotine content of your device. The data is sent back to the manufacturer.

Big Tobacco is literally cooking up their next product, and they have billions to invest in R&D. They tell us these devices are to help smokers quit. They are blatantly re-branding themselves as a harm reduction

product provider. A product that is soft, squishy, looks like a teddy bear and comes in pink, baby blue, and rainbow colors is not harm reduction. That is harm initiation.

One product innovation after another. Nicotine toothpicks, lollipops, gummies, shots. What's next?

Tobacco prevention organizations and Public Health professionals have advocated for policies to reduce youth access to tobacco products for decades. We've done so much. Cigar minimum price, flavor ban, T-21, pharmacy ban, permit cap. But year after year, new products. Band-aid after band-aid is not enough.

I won't dwell on the harms caused by nicotine addiction. The health issues. Financial burden. Even career opportunities lost due to a nicotine habit.

It's time to adopt a strategy that moves us towards a generation of young people who will never experience tobacco. Just as we now have a generation of young people who have never been in a restaurant, school, hospital, hair salon, or movie theater; or ridden on a plane, train, subway, or bus where someone is smoking. We can and we need to make this change. But how do we do that?

The Tobacco Industry has their playbook – "Hook them while they're young and you have a customer for life" – That's a quote from industry documents.

We have a playbook too. And we've used that playbook for many important public health issues. One city or town adopts a groundbreaking policy like Smoke-Free Workplace Law, more cities and towns follow until we have critical mass, and then the State Legislature takes it up – as they did with T-21 and the Flavor Ban.

Six communities in my region have adopted NFG. There are eighteen municipalities state-wide with several more, like Dover, in some phase of considering NFG. We hope you vote to adopt this important public health policy and help reduce youth use of this addictive substance.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Maureen Buzby

Maureen Buzby
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