

To the Editor:

As reported, a state legislative committee held a hearing on Nicotine Free Generation (NFG). Two Pioneer Valley residents spoke in support of proposed legislation.

Heather Warner of the Hampshire Franklin Tobacco-Free Community Partnership and I testified about the need to reduce exposure to vulnerable teens from friends just older than 21. This is especially important here because of our large number of undergrads. As with other addictive drugs, unwary young people become hooked to vapes, pouches, and newer Big Tobacco products while socializing.

Over 500,000 Massachusetts residents live in NFG communities. In Belchertown, where I serve on the Board of Health, NFG was enacted seven months ago, restricting sales to those born before 2004. Many local high school students strongly supported us, since they want their peers to live beyond their 40s and 50s. Other Pioneer Valley boards should join us in protecting local young people against the poisons pushed by Big Tobacco.

-- Ken Elstein, Member, Belchertown Board of Health

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