

Slide 1: Introduction

- Greeting and Acknowledgment: “Good morning, everyone. Thank you all for being here and thank you to MHOA for your commitment to tobacco prevention. Today, we’re here to discuss the Nicotine-Free Generation (NFG) policy—a bold approach designed to protect future generations from the dangers of nicotine addiction. As health officers, you have played crucial roles in past tobacco policies that have made Massachusetts a leader in tobacco control. This policy is a continuation of that legacy.”

- Engaging the Audience with “Show of Hands”:
 - o “To start, let’s take a quick poll. By a show of hands, how many of you here today were involved in passing smoke-free housing laws in your communities?”
 - o “How many of you helped implement the Tobacco 21 policy, raising the minimum age for purchasing tobacco products?”
 - o “And finally, who here has worked on implementing flavor bans to keep youth from being drawn to candy-flavored tobacco products?”

- Connecting to the NFG Policy: “Thank you all for raising your hands. The Nicotine-Free Generation policy builds directly on this groundwork. Like those initiatives, NFG is focused on protecting public health, and specifically the health of young people. It’s a natural next step in our fight to prevent youth from getting addicted to nicotine and protect future generations from tobacco-related harm.”

Slide 2: The Tobacco Industry's Impact and Continued Influence

- Public Health Crisis: “To understand the need for NFG, let’s first take a look at the tobacco industry’s ongoing impact. Tobacco use kills more than 480,000 Americans each year. In Massachusetts alone, over 9,000 people die annually

from nicotine-related illnesses, making nicotine addiction the number one preventable cause of death here—surpassing even opioid-related fatalities.”

- Youth Targeting by Big Tobacco: “Despite these staggering numbers, the tobacco industry spends over \$8 billion each year in advertising, much of it aimed at young people to create a new generation of users. We’ve seen the industry’s tactics, from flavored vapes to targeted online ads, which appeal specifically to youth. These products are designed to hook young people early, before they fully understand the consequences, creating lifelong customers for the industry.”
- Ongoing Innovation in Nicotine Delivery: “The tobacco industry is relentless in finding ways to bypass regulations and reach young audiences. New products, like synthetic nicotine and e-cigarettes, keep emerging, often staying a step ahead of regulatory measures. This ongoing push to maintain youth appeal makes the need for a stronger, more definitive approach like NFG critical.”

Slide 3: The Case for the Nicotine-Free Generation (NFG) Policy

- Overview of the Policy: “The Nicotine-Free Generation policy is a proactive approach to stop nicotine addiction before it starts. It proposes that anyone born after a certain date, like January 1, 2004, would be restricted from purchasing nicotine products. This allows those who already use nicotine to continue purchasing, but it stops the next generation from accessing these products. By doing this, NFG phases out nicotine use over time without taking anything away from current users.”
- Long-Term Impact: “The evidence is clear: 95% of smokers start before age 21, and almost all of them begin before they’re 26. This policy aims to prevent youth from becoming the next wave of nicotine users. By cutting off the supply,

we can significantly reduce the number of young people who develop lifelong nicotine addiction, protecting their health and future opportunities.”

Slide 4: Countering Tobacco Industry Arguments - Personal Freedom

- Industry Framing: “The tobacco industry often argues that policies like NFG infringe on personal freedom. They frame nicotine restrictions as limiting adults’ ability to make their own choices. But we should ask ourselves: is addiction really a choice?”
- Counterargument - Addiction as Compulsion: “Nicotine addiction is a compulsion, not a choice. The majority of users start in their teens, often influenced by marketing and peer pressure. Addiction makes it difficult, if not impossible, to stop without intervention. The NFG policy doesn’t stop anyone already using nicotine from continuing to access it; it just ensures that the next generation won’t have to struggle with the same addiction.”
- Comparable Policies: “It’s worth noting that public health measures have often restricted dangerous products without infringing on personal rights. Bans on asbestos, lead paint, and certain FDA-banned supplements serve as examples. Tobacco, which causes more harm than any of these, fits the criteria for such protections. NFG is not about limiting freedom but about protecting public health and giving young people a chance to grow up addiction-free.”

Slide 5: Countering Economic Arguments - The Myth of Economic Harm

- Small Business Concerns: “Another argument against NFG is that it will hurt small businesses that rely on nicotine sales. Opponents claim that removing nicotine sales from their inventory will have a negative financial impact.”
- Counterargument - Gradual Transition: “However, NFG is designed to phase out sales gradually. The market for nicotine will decline year by year, giving businesses ample time to adapt and diversify their offerings. This approach doesn’t lead to a sudden drop in sales, allowing retailers to adjust their business model and reduce reliance on nicotine products.”
- Successful Precedents: “We’ve seen similar shifts before. When pharmacies in Massachusetts stopped selling tobacco products, many continued to thrive by refocusing on health-oriented products. Just as those businesses successfully adapted, other retailers can transition away from nicotine dependence in a similar way under NFG.”

Slide 6: Countering the Black Market Concern

- Black Market Myths: “Another concern is that restricted access will lead to black market sales or young people buying nicotine products in nearby towns.”
- Needham, MA Case Study: “The case of Needham, Massachusetts, offers a real-world example of why this doesn’t hold true. When Needham became the first town to raise the legal purchase age to 21, critics predicted black market activity would increase. Instead, Needham saw a 50% drop in high school smoking rates, the steepest decline on record. This shows that even local restrictions can have a strong impact on youth smoking, without creating black markets.”

- Built-In Market for Current Users: “The NFG policy also allows current users to continue buying nicotine legally. This approach ensures that there is no sudden demand for illicit products since those who already use nicotine can still purchase it. As a result, the gradual phase-out reduces the likelihood of black market activity.”

Slide 7: The Effectiveness of Local and State Regulations

- Previous Successes: “Massachusetts has a history of pioneering public health regulations in tobacco control. Smoke-free workplaces, flavor bans, and the Tobacco 21 law all started at the local level and have led to significant decreases in smoking rates, especially among youth.”
- Massachusetts as a Health Policy Leader: “Local health boards in Massachusetts have played a crucial role in these successes, showing that state and local action can lead the way in reducing tobacco use and saving lives. The NFG policy is the next step in this powerful legacy.”

Slide 8: Health, Equity, and Social Benefits

- Reducing Health Inequities: “Nicotine addiction disproportionately affects lower-income and minority communities, often those with limited access to cessation resources. By gradually reducing nicotine access, NFG can help close these health gaps, promoting a healthier, more equitable society.”
- Military Readiness: “This policy also has implications beyond public health. Tobacco-free young adults are stronger and healthier recruits, contributing to

improved military readiness and physical fitness across our future service members.”

- Societal Savings: “Finally, the NFG policy will help reduce healthcare costs associated with treating chronic diseases related to tobacco use. By preventing addiction early, we not only save lives but also allocate public health resources more effectively over time.”

Slide 10: Conclusion

- A Call to Action: “The Nicotine-Free Generation policy represents a sustainable, evidence-based approach to public health. By gradually phasing out nicotine addiction, we protect future generations and create a healthier, more resilient society.”
- Join the Movement: “Massachusetts has been a leader in tobacco regulation. Now, with NFG, we have an opportunity to take another bold step. Together, we can ensure that young people grow up without the lifelong burden of nicotine addiction. Thank you.”