



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Mystic Valley Tobacco Alcohol Program
Malden, Medford, Melrose, Reading, Stoneham, Wakefield, Winchester

562 Main Street
Melrose, MA 02176

May 6, 2025

Michael Boudreau
Director of Public Health
Natick Town Hall
13 East Central St.
Natick, MA 01760

Re: Nicotine Free Generation Policy Discussion

Dear Mr. Boudreau:

I am writing to thank you, your staff, and the Natick Board of Health, for a very thorough and thoughtful Nicotine Free Generation discussion. One of your board members correctly pointed out that “it is a big step”. It is a big step. An important step.

I have worked with several municipalities who have or are considering NFG. In fact, six of the seven communities in my own Tobacco Program collaborative were early adopters of NFG. Being the first Boards of Health in the world to adopt NFG (Brookline was the very first but as a by-law), they also were thoughtful and diligent. They couldn't look around to see who else in the area had already taken this important step because of course no one else had. But like Natick, these six municipalities have been early adopters of many important tobacco sales regulations so they knew what to do - - research, meet with community leaders and prevention partners, solicit input from subject matter experts, reach out to tobacco retailers, and hold public hearings.

We know there are many important Health Department priorities, but we also know smoking is still the leading cause of preventable death in the US. And, as you pointed out, with their vast resources, the predatory tobacco industry continues to introduce new appealing products like the ones you can see in the attached photos - vape devices that look like teddy bears, miniature guitars, and even CD's on which you can play music and vape.

This is why we were so grateful that you allowed us to speak during previous Board meetings. Given that youth vaping is still a serious issue in our schools, and the tremendous increase we've seen in synthetic nicotine pouch use, we hope Natick will continue to be a leader in tobacco prevention, as you were when tobacco control advocates encouraged Boards to change the Minimum Legal Sales Age from 18 to 21, which paved the way for state-wide law.

Reaching critical mass will make it more likely that state legislators make NFG state law also. In fact, that's what led to our state's pharmacy ban, flavor ban, and other important public health policies.

Please let us know if there is any additional information we can provide you and your board as you continue the dialogue. We have a small group of volunteers with legal, medical, substance use, and public health expertise, all of whom are willing to meet or to share additional information.

Again, thank you, and please pass along our gratitude to the Board and to your staff for taking up this groundbreaking policy which has such potential for protecting young people from a lifetime of addiction to harmful products relentlessly peddled to youth by a well-funded industry that is always on the hunt for new customers.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Maureen Buzby
Tobacco Prevention Program Manager
Mystic Valley Regional Tobacco Program
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