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Subject My NFG brain dump

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I had to write something for someone who is having a meeting with community partners. It was a quick brain dump but in case this is of any help to you...

>14 communities have NFG – one by-law, one city ordinance, one resolution (a town with no stores so they don't have tobacco regulations but if one tries to come to town...), and the rest BOH regulation.

>State bill filed in early January. We'll need many cities and towns to pass NFG before we would have a chance of having state-wide legislation. Just like smoke-free housing or T-21.

What else?

>What is NFG / What does NFG do?

____NFG doesn't take away any privileges. Anyone who can legally buy now will still be able to buy tobacco products.

____NFG covers all nicotine delivery products, not just combustible tobacco.

____NFG does not affect FDA-approved NRT's in any way at all. Chantix, the patch, Nicorette gum, etc. will still be available.

____Long, slow runway so retailers have time to get used to slightly lower tobacco

sales each year. Just those who turn 21 in any given year and only those who would have become nicotine users are affected.

_____Easier for clerks – just one date to remember.

_____Today's nicotine products are not your parents' or grandparents' nicotine products. Higher in nicotine. Cheaper, and very discrete.

_____Many new products on the market: highlight vape pens; ink pens that look and write like a Bic pen but are also vapes; vape devices on which you can play video games. And, of course, pouches. Though I don't want people to get distracted by pouches. They just happen to the IT product right now. Anywhere from 2 – 30 mg nicotine in a single pouch compared to 24 mg in an entire pack of Marlboro's.

And very, very cheap. Around \$5.00 for a tin of 15 or 20 pouches depending on the brand, compared to a pack of Marlboro's which costs \$14.00. Huge zap to the brain. Adolescent brain very susceptible to nicotine addiction.

_____The industry makes billions. They can invest in product research and development as well as in marketing. And they go after young people with product design.

There will be and has been pushback by the industry. Well-organized and well-funded. Retailers, distributors, trade association excels like Peter Brennan from NECSEMA (New England Convenience and Energy Marketer's Association), as well as Stephen Helfer from Cambridge Citizens for Smokers' Rights. Posters on store windows. Tear-off flyers on counters. Robo emails to municipal officials begging them to reject this policy. And on and on.

_____They'll talk about an adult's freedom to choose. Once people are addicted they no longer have the freedom of choice. That's what addiction is.

_____They'll talk about the alcohol prohibition which didn't work. This is not prohibition. It doesn't affect anyone who can legally buy and is already addicted. Big difference.

_____They'll say bans don't work. We ban lots of toxic substances. Lead paint. Asbestos. Red dye #3.

_____They'll say this is a slippery slope. What next - - Twinkies? This policy is about tobacco. A poisonous substance which kills 50% of its users. Smoking is still the leading cause of preventable death. Sure, there are foods that are not

good for us when eaten in excess. There are other agencies looking at food.

____ They'll say this will create a black market. Not true because adults will still be able to purchase so there is no need for a black market. This only affects those not yet able to legally purchase tobacco products.

____ They'll say why not alcohol and cannabis. Tobacco has no redeeming qualities. There is some evidence that cannabis can help with certain medical and mental health conditions. That can't be said of tobacco. Alcohol, when used in moderation, does not kill at the rate tobacco use does. There are many social drinkers. There are almost no social smokers.

____ They'll say we need to educate our kids. We do. We can't keep up with social media and with Big Tobacco's billions.

____ They'll say retailers are the best line of defense, the best way to keep tobacco out of the hands of underage youth. In a recent round of compliance checks seven stores in one community sold to the underage buyer. Other jurisdictions have even worse compliance.

____ They'll say we need more enforcement and that we should penalize youth. The industry tempts youth with product design and celebrity advertising. Juul got sued for that. Kids are impressionable. Brains are not fully developed until about age 25. Of course they are going to try high risk behavior. It's not fair to blame youth. Stores that are not compliant are part of the issue. Online sales for sure. The Tobacco industry's products are the biggest issue. We need to adopt public health policy that will help keep kids from accessing these products, potentially getting addicted and then suffering the consequences. Health issues we all know about. Loss of school privileges like school sports. Financial burden. Opportunity costs – kids can't join the military if they use nicotine. Police and firefighting careers may be unavailable to them. To say nothing of the impact nicotine addiction has on learning. Cessation is just too hard – for adults say nothing about youth.

____ They'll say we'll lose important state tax revenue. We'll more than make up for it with reductions in health care costs related to smoking.

Youth want this. It's about them and for them. We should listen to youth.

This isn't everything of course but it covers some of it.

NOTE: I purposely included report card-like scoring. If you are running a meeting and something is mentioned you can check it off. Or if you are preparing for a

presentation you can use this as a checklist though I've never been able to include everything all at once. That would be like getting information from a firehose.

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