



Andrew M. Cuomo - Governor

Governor Cuomo Signs Bills to Protect New York's Youth from Harmful Effects of Cigarettes

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Albany, NY (September 5, 2012)

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today signed two bills to protect New York's children and teenagers from the harmful effects of cigarettes.

The new laws include measures to prohibit smoking within 100 feet of the entrances or exits of any public or private schools (A.10141-B / S.6854-B), as well as prohibit the sale of electronic cigarettes to individuals under the age of 18 (A.9044-B / S.2926-B).

"Cigarette smoking – as well as exposure to secondhand smoke – is dangerous, particularly for our children," Governor Cuomo said. "These two new laws will strengthen our state's protections to help our young people avoid nicotine addiction as well as the harmful effects of cigarette smoke. I thank the sponsors of both these bills for their efforts to protect the health of our youth."

Prohibiting Smoking Outside School Entrances

There are tens of thousands of deaths each year in New York related to tobacco use. In addition to smoking, exposure to secondhand smoke may cause various illnesses and is known to be particularly detrimental to the health of children who are in their early years of physical development.

The new law expands the ban on smoking on school grounds to prohibit smoking within 100 feet of the entrances, exits or outdoor areas of public and private schools. Residences or residential property within the 100 foot perimeter would be excluded from the new law's smoking ban. This new law takes effect immediately.

Senator Gustavo Rivera said, "I want to thank Governor Cuomo for signing this important piece of legislation into law that will make our communities healthier by extending the ban on smoking to within 100 feet of school entrances and exits. I worked with Assembly Member Dinowitz to pass this law so that young people in the Bronx and throughout the state can enjoy a smoke-free school year. This is the first in a series of bills to be signed into law that came directly from the Bronx CAN Health Initiative that Borough President Diaz Jr. and I launched last year with community partners."

Assembly Member Jeff Dinowitz said, "The scourge of smoking is a terrible public health issue for all New Yorkers, especially our children. This new law will make sure that hazardous smoke is kept at a reasonable distance from our public or private educational institutions, providing a great relief for many parents who worry about poisonous carcinogens sickening their children. I applaud Governor Cuomo for supporting this measure and signing it into law."

Prohibiting Sale of Electronic Cigarettes to Minors

Cigarette smoking delivers toxins and carcinogens to the body, leading to diseases such as lung cancer and emphysema which are often fatal. Nicotine is the addictive ingredient in cigarettes that makes it very difficult for smokers to quit, despite knowledge of the devastating health effects of cigarette use.

The majority of Americans who use tobacco products become addicted to the nicotine in those products before reaching the age of 18 years. Electronic cigarettes (often known as "e-cigarettes") are battery-powered devices that allow users to inhale a vaporized liquid nicotine solution instead of tobacco smoke. E-cigarettes could serve as a pathway to nicotine addiction for children, leading them to smoke cigarettes and use other tobacco products. Moreover, e-cigarette refill cartridges, often sold without protective packaging, contain high concentrations of nicotine which could be fatal if accidentally ingested by young children. In addition, the FDA has warned that e-cigarettes may contain ingredients that are known to be toxic to humans or that may otherwise be unsafe.

The new law prohibits the sale of electronic cigarettes to individuals who are less than 18 years of age. The bill passed the Assembly and Senate unanimously, and the new law takes effect on January 1, 2013.

Senator Owen Johnson said, "I am thrilled that the Governor has signed this bill into law. Unlike other nicotine-containing products, e-cigarettes are not currently regulated and, as such, children are legally able to purchase these devices and consume nicotine, an addictive chemical. In fact, the idea for this bill came to me from school officials in my District. This is common sense legislation that keeps an addictive chemical away from children and adolescents, while at the same time preserving the rights of adults to make their own informed decisions about whether to use these products and I thank Governor Cuomo for signing it into law."

Assembly Member Linda B. Rosenthal said, "I am pleased that Governor Cuomo has signed my bill to ban the sale of electronic cigarettes to minors and to regulate them in the same way that other tobacco products are currently regulated. Electronic cigarettes, or e-cigarettes, though currently unregulated and potentially dangerous to human health, are manufactured in flavors meant to appeal to young people, such as bubblegum and chocolate. E-cigarettes contain nicotine, the highly addictive ingredient found in cigarettes and other tobacco products, which will hook yet another generation of young people on a deadly habit. We will be saving lives by preventing a generation of young people from sampling that first, addictive cigarette."

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