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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Michael J. Murphy
(414) 286-3763

Common Council passes e-cigarette measure Latest move caps off public health package

Today (Wednesday, June 20), the Common Council unanimously passed a resolution that prohibits use of e-cigarettes on City property and in public places where state law currently bans smoking. The legislation is the latest in a three-prong effort to increase public health related to tobacco use.

The first item increases fines for those who sell tobacco to minors. It also increases the fine for retailers selling single cigarettes, known as “loosies” to \$691.00. The fine for selling single cigarettes had been \$181 for a first offense and \$321 for second and subsequent offenses. According to data from the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, every day 3,000 people under the age of 18 use tobacco for the first time with 700 becoming daily tobacco users. The group says “loosies” and other tobacco products make it easier for young people to become addicted to tobacco.

The move to increase fines was instituted last month by Municipal Court, but done so at the encouragement of Alderman Michael J. Murphy, Alderman Cavalier “Chevy” Johnson and the Office of the City Attorney.

The second item -- passed by the Common Council on May 30, 2018 -- prohibits the sale of e-cigarettes to minors, aligning local ordinance with current state statute. “With youth e-cigarette usage nearly doubling from 2014 to 2016, this forward thinking action by the Milwaukee Common Council will help send a message to our youth that no matter what flavor they come in, e-cigarettes are both addictive for the user and harmful to those breathing in the secondhand aerosol,” said Anneke Mohr, Community Advocates - City of Milwaukee Tobacco-Free Alliance coordinator.

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The third item, passed today by the Common Council, prohibits use of e-cigarettes on City property and in places where state law currently bans smoking. Alderman Murphy was lead sponsor of the resolution with Council members Ashanti Hamilton, Cavalier “Chevy” Johnson and Milele A. Coggs co-sponsoring.

“Next month we celebrate the 8th anniversary of Wisconsin’s smoke free law in public places,” said Alderman Johnson. “As new products have since emerged we can better address them through this resolution and align our policy with state law.”

Alderman Murphy said the intent of these policies was to increase overall public health. “This package is a major step forward in protecting the health of all Milwaukeeans and reducing the impact of tobacco and nicotine on youth.”

A 2016 report from the World Health Organization (WHO) concluded that secondhand aerosols from e-cigarettes are a new air contamination source for hazardous particulate matter (PM). The levels of some metals, such as nickel and chromium, in second-hand aerosols are not only higher than background air, but also higher than second-hand smoke.