



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

KATJANA BALLANTYNE
MAYOR

KARIN CARROLL
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

MINUTES
BOARD OF HEALTH
December 19, 2024

Open Conference / Virtual (Zoom) Meeting

Members Present:

Brian Green. MD (Chair)
Margaret H Coit, Board Member
Alyssa Dubois, Board Member
Lucy Barrows, Recording Secretary
Karin Carroll, Director of Health & Human Services
Bonny Carroll, Tobacco Control Coordinator

Roll Call: Brian Green

- 1. Meeting Call to Order:** Brian Green made a motion to open the meeting at 6:02 pm. It was seconded by Alyssa Dubois. All in favor.
- 2. Minutes Approval:** Brian Green made a motion to approve the minutes from November 21, 2024. It was seconded by Alyssa Dubois. All in favor.
- 3. Free Generation**
Bonny Carroll, Anthony Chui, Director of Health and Human Services, City of Melrose and Stoneham Mark Gottlieb, Executive Director of Public Health Advocacy Institute, Katharine Silbaugh, JD Professor, BU School of Law.

Anthony Chui- Despite all the tobacco control policies, we are still seeing new addictive and harmful products. After a lot of engagement with youth, schools, community and BOH and were the first towns in this area to adopt the policy. The policy uses a set, birth date restriction which will reduce the need for retailers to constantly be calculating age at the point of purchase.

Mark Gottlieb- Represented the town of Brookline during a legal challenge of the policy and the policy was upheld. Now implemented in 11 towns in Massachusetts and are the first in the world. The policy will protect disadvantaged and low-income communities. No safe age for using tobacco and nicotine. Youth from marginalized communities are exposed more to high density tobacco marketing and stores. As older peers are phased out of ever purchasing tobacco products it will result in fewer youth using these

products as they often purchase for underage. This policy happens over time and does not have a sudden economic impact on retailers.

Safe nicotine will stay on the market and will be exempted from the policy.

Margaret Coit asked about how communication is provided to the public and how to get buy in from the community.

J Winickoff- In polls, the public is very supportive of the initiative. Youth are very supportive of this policy and do not want their generation to be converted to nicotine/tobacco dependence. The policy does not take any rights away from adults who are already using these products and those most affected want the policy.

Equity issue- poorer communities are hit worse in that they have lower discretionary income, and they also restricted from access to many jobs due to smoking.

Anthony Chui stated that engaged in a lot of conversations with youth as well as seniors who also supported protecting youth.

Dr Green asked if the “patchwork” adoption of NFG will result in youth going to the next town etc. to purchase the products.

Anthony Chui stated the state is looking at a state-wide law in 2025. Mark Gottlieb reminded the Board that people already using products legally will still be allowed to. In Needham, they did not observe the crossing over the border.

Kate Silbaugh stated that this policy is compassionate to those already addicted. It eliminates a black market because those already addicted can access the product. In Brookline, not one retailer has closed in the 3 years since they implemented NFG. The harm reduction argument does not apply as the minors never were addicted to nicotine and therefore needing it as a harm reduction strategy.

Lung cancer rates 2+ times the state rate.

Bonny Carroll was asked to present this to the city solicitor’s office for review and, if approved, Board will move to a public hearing.

- 4. Health and Human Services Updates** – Karin Carroll referred to the HHS Quarterly report provided to the Board. Karin Carroll mentioned the Warming Center has been open for two weeks at this time everything is going well.

5. Next Meeting: January 23rd ,2025

Meeting Adjourn: Brian Green moves to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 PM. Margaret Coit seconded. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lucy Barrows
Board of Health Recording Secretary