Tobacco use is the number one cause of preventable disease and premature death in Texas.

Over 3 million Texas adults smoke cigarettes, and most smokers (95 percent) took their first puff well before age 21. Youth tobacco use increases risk of nicotine addiction, and continued use through adulthood causes lung cancer, coronary heart disease, diabetes, and early death.

Approximately 10,400 youth in Texas under the age of 18 become new smokers annually. Prevention strategies, such as raising the minimum legal age for purchasing tobacco products to 21, will help prevent or delay youth tobacco use by lowering the likelihood of youth being in the same social networks as those who can legally purchase tobacco. Nearly 70 percent of voters favor raising the minimum legal age to 21, and 68 percent want increased funding for tobacco prevention programs in Texas.

**TEXAS PUBLIC HEALTH COALITION RECOMMENDS:**

1. Support SB 21, and support and sign on as coauthor to HB 749 to raise the age of sale for tobacco products to 21, including all electronic smoking devices and future tobacco-related products.

2. Restore Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) tobacco-use prevention funding to 2016-17 levels, $16.4 million in state funds for the biennium.

3. Support and sign on as coauthor to HJR 12 and HB 39, and support HB 438 to sustain the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas.

4. Eliminate the budget rider prohibiting DSHS from using paid media to combat tobacco industry marketing.

Source: ACS CAN Texas Cancer Poll, conducted by Public Opinion Strategies, Dec. 16-19, 2018
The Texas Public Health Coalition is a coalition of health professional organizations and health-focused organizations dedicated to disease prevention and health promotion.

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MEMBERS

Alzheimer's Association
American Cancer Society
Cancer Action Network
American Heart Association
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas
Children's Hospital Association of Texas
The Cooper Institute
Harris County Public Health
The Immunization Partnership
March of Dimes
Methodist Healthcare Ministries
Texas Academy of Family Physicians
Texas Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Texas Academy of Physician Assistants
Texas Association of City & County Health Officials
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Texas eHealth Alliance
Texas Health Institute
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Texas Medical Association
Texas Nurses Association
Texas Oral Health Coalition, Inc.
Texas Osteopathic Medical Association
Texas Pediatric Society
Texas Physicians for Social Responsibility
Texas Public Health Association
Texas Renal Coalition
Texas School Nurses Organization
Texas State Alliance of YMCAs
United Ways of Texas

REFERENCES
1 America’s Health Rankings, 2018. https://www.americashealthrankings.org

RESOURCES
CANCER PREVENTION AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TEXAS
MD ANDERSON CANCER CENTER
MICHAEL AND SUSAN DELL CENTER FOR HEALTHY LIVING
PARTNERSHIP FOR A HEALTHY TEXAS
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES