



SENT VIA E-MAIL

April 4, 2022

Dear Mayor Mars and City Council Members:

On behalf of Children's Minnesota, I am writing to voice concerns with the proposed ordinance to prohibit the sale of all flavored e-cigarettes and e-liquids in Shakopee. It is important to end the sale of *all* types of flavored tobacco products, not just e-cigarettes.

Children's Minnesota is the state's largest pediatric health care system. We serve an incredibly diverse patient population and 46 percent of our patients are insured through Medicaid. Last year, we saw over 135,000 patients; more than 1,200 of those patients were from Shakopee.

As the kid experts in our community, Children's Minnesota is committed to promoting a healthier and more equitable future for our kids. Tobacco use and addiction is an important health equity issue that must be addressed. We know the tobacco industry has a long history of targeting specific communities through various marketing efforts. Because of this targeting, the Black community, LGBTQ+ people, youth, and low-income populations are disproportionately impacted by tobacco-related illnesses.

In 2019, providers at Children's Minnesota found a cluster of cases of vaping-related severe lung injuries in teens and young adults. Despite these injuries and growing evidence of the health harms of e-cigarettes, thousands of flavored vapes remain on the market alongside flavored cigars and menthol tobacco products. However, many types of tobacco products with candy and mint flavors are extremely attractive to children and young adults, and at these young ages they are especially vulnerable to addiction. **As you consider policy to prohibit the sale of flavored e-cigarettes and e-liquids, we urge you to end the sale of *all* flavored tobacco products such as cigars, chewing tobacco and menthol cigarettes.** Singling out a specific type of tobacco product not only leaves kid-friendly flavored products on the shelves but also creates a policy that is difficult to enforce and ripe for litigation.

We ask you to partner with us in our efforts to support the health and future of children and youth by ending the sale of all flavored tobacco products, including menthol, in Shakopee.

Sincerely,

Amanda Jansen, MPP
Director of Public Policy
Children's Minnesota