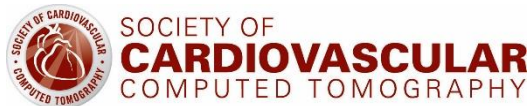




AMERICAN COLLEGE of CARDIOLOGY



June 3, 2019

The Honorable Brian Schatz
U.S. Senate
722 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Diana DeGette
U.S. House of Representatives
2111 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Schatz and Representative DeGette:

The undersigned organizations, representing cardiovascular clinicians across the United States, write to express our strong support for H.R. 2411/S. 1258, the *Tobacco to 21 Act*. Thank you for introducing this important legislation to address a crippling public health crisis that is threatening to diminish the many years of progress our country has made in reducing tobacco use.

The cardiovascular care community is committed to reducing youth tobacco usage. As you know, tobacco use has long been associated with cardiovascular disease, and is responsible for nearly one in four deaths.¹ A recent study found smoking is associated with a thickening of the heart and lowers the heart's pumping ability – both of which are associated with heart failure.² Additionally, the longer individuals without heart disease smoked, combined with the amount of cigarettes consumed, the greater the damage to their hearts' structure and function. Finally, e-cigarettes, which have been growing in popularity, especially among minors, are as harmful to the heart as smoking combustible cigarettes.³

The *Tobacco to 21 Act* will help prevent chronic disease and protect public health by restricting youth access to tobacco products. Young adults are most vulnerable to social and environmental influences, as the U.S. Surgeon General report states that 99% of smokers begin using tobacco

¹ https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/50th-anniversary/pdfs/fs_smoking_CVD_508.pdf

² <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/full/10.1161/CIRCIMAGING.116.004950>

³ <https://www.cardiosmart.org/Healthy-Living/Stop-Smoking/Smoking-and-Heart-Disease>

by their mid-20s.⁴ We wholeheartedly support reducing youth access to tobacco products, and believe the *Tobacco to 21 Act* is in line with this shared goal of all cardiovascular societies.

Our organizations applaud your leadership on this important issue and look forward to helping advance legislation to further reduce youth tobacco use across the country. We stand ready to partner with you and other stakeholders to achieve that goal.

Sincerely,

American College of Cardiology
American Society of Echocardiography
American Society of Nuclear Cardiology
Association of Black Cardiologists
Heart Failure Society of America
Heart Rhythm Society
Society for Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance
Society for Vascular Medicine
Society of Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions
Society of Cardiovascular Computed Tomography
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

Cc: Senator Todd Young
Senator Dick Durbin
Senator Mitt Romney
Representative Chris Stewart

⁴ <https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/reports-and-publications/tobacco/preventing-youth-tobacco-use-factsheet/index.html>