



For Immediate Release

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Governor Signs Act to Protect Youth From New Tobacco Products

Joint statement from the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, American Lung Association in Minnesota, Association for Nonsmokers - MN, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, ClearWay MinnesotaSM, Local Public Health Association and HealthPartners

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn., May 11, 2010 – Today Minnesota’s leading health groups applauded Governor Tim Pawlenty for taking another step to protect youth from harmful tobacco products. This afternoon, the Governor signed into law the Tobacco Modernization and Compliance Act of 2010, which updates Minnesota laws to address new generations of tobacco products.

Effective August 1, 2010, these changes apply existing state tobacco taxes and regulations to new smokeless tobacco products, which attract young customers because they are low-cost, come in candy flavors and sometimes resemble mints and breath strips. Specifically, the Tobacco Modernization and Compliance Act of 2010:

- Expands the definition of tobacco products to include any product that contains tobacco and is intended for human consumption
- Requires all tobacco products to be sold behind the counter so they are not easily accessible to youth
- Prevents the sale of new tobacco products and e-cigarettes to youth

“Broad bipartisan support of this law ensures Minnesota will keep pace with the tobacco industry’s aggressive marketing and ability to take advantage of legal loopholes,” said David Willoughby, Chief Executive Officer of ClearWay Minnesota. “The Governor’s signature is an important first step in protecting our kids from new and addictive smokeless tobacco products.

“But our work is far from done,” Willoughby continued. “Tobacco products remain accessible, affordable and attractive to young people and the consequences are costly. We need to continue to advocate policy solutions that will reduce the harm of tobacco in Minnesota.”