



Who We Are

Attorney General
Tom Miller
Office Directory

What We Do

Protecting Consumers
Fighting Crime
Helping Victims of Crime
Working for Farmers
Protecting the Environment
Raising Child Support Awareness
Representing State Government
Issuing Attorney General Opinions
Enforcing Tobacco Laws
Protecting Utility Customers

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Consumer Advisory Bulletin

Tobacco Wars -- and How You Can Volunteer!

Some call them the "Tobacco Wars." Indeed, fierce action and struggle have flared up on many fronts throughout the country, including right here in Iowa.

My top objective is to reduce the terrible cost of young people becoming addicted to tobacco. We know that at least eight out of ten daily smokers begin before they are age eighteen, and about one of three youths who become regular smokers will die early as a result of it. If we can only keep people tobacco-free when they are young, most will never start using it -- and we will save thousands of lives and untold human suffering.

I've sued the tobacco industry to recover hundreds of millions of dollars, and I'm urging the Legislature to cut teen use of tobacco by raising the cigarette tax, requiring behind-the-counter-only sales, and funding an aggressive campaign against teens using tobacco. Enforcing our laws restricting youth access also is crucial to saving lives in the long run. You can help us keep Iowa young people safe from tobacco.

Iowa law seeks to protect Iowa's children from tobacco addiction in several ways:

- Tobacco retailers are prohibited from selling tobacco to anyone under age 18.
- Persons under 18 are prohibited from using, buying, or attempting to buy tobacco.
- Cigarette vending machines are banned anywhere persons under 18 are permitted.

Sadly, in spite of these laws, when a person under 18 tries to buy cigarettes from an Iowa retailer, 27% of the time the youngster is sold tobacco, no questions asked. And, sadly, smoking and other tobacco use among our young people has been increasing.

If you notice violations of any of these laws, please report them to your local police or sheriff's department. They may issue citations and work with city or county officials to initiate proceedings against tobacco retail permit-holders who violate the laws.

In addition, if you become aware of a tobacco retailer who makes unlawful sales to minors, the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) invites you to call their hotline to report the violation. The FDA is making plans to increase enforcement of prohibitions against tobacco sales to minors, and it welcomes citizen reports that may help them target violators. The FDA's toll-free hotline number is (888) 332-4543.

We need to do all we can to keep our young people from becoming addicted to tobacco. This is everyone's concern, and we all can play a part. It's a matter of Iowa's health, Iowa's youth, and Iowa's future. Please join us!

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