Families Uniting Locally to Solve Tobacco Proliferation
Tobacco Timeline

» Cigarettes were first introduced in the United States in the early 19th century. Before this, tobacco was used primarily in pipes and cigars, by chewing, and in snuff.

» By the time of the Civil War, cigarette use had become more popular. Federal tax was first imposed on cigarettes in 1864. Shortly afterwards, the development of the cigarette manufacturing industry led to their quickly becoming a major US tobacco product.

» At the same time, the populist health reform movement led to early anti-smoking activity. From 1880–1920, this activity was largely motivated by moral and hygienic concerns rather than health issues.

» The milder flue-cured tobacco blends used in cigarettes during the early 20th century made the smoke easier to inhale and increased nicotine absorption into the bloodstream.

» During World War I, army surgeons praised cigarettes for helping the wounded to relax and ease their pain.

» Smoking was first linked to lung cancer and other diseases in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

» In 1956, a Surgeon General’s scientific study group determined that there was a causal relationship between excessive cigarette smoking and lung cancer.

» In England, the 1962 Royal College of Physicians report emphasized smoking’s causative role in lung cancer.

» Anti-smoking messages had a significant impact on cigarette sales; however, when cigarette advertising on television and radio was banned in 1969, anti-smoking messages were discontinued.

» The 1972 Surgeon General’s report became the first of a series of science-based reports to identify environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) as a health risk to nonsmokers.

» In 1973, Arizona became the first state to restrict smoking in a number of public places explicitly because ETS exposure is a public hazard.

» By the mid-1970s, the federal government began administratively regulating smoking within government domains. In 1975, the army and navy stopped including cigarettes in rations for service members. Smoking was restricted in all federal government facilities in 1979 and was banned in the White House in 1993.

» In 1988, Congress prohibited smoking on domestic commercial airline flights scheduled for two hours or less. By 1990, the ban was extended to all commercial US flights.

» In 1992, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) classified ETS as “Group A”, the most dangerous class of carcinogen.

» In 1994, Mississippi became the first state to sue the tobacco industry to recover Medicaid costs for tobacco-related illnesses, settling its suit in 1997. A total of 46 states eventually filed similar suits. Three other states settled individually with the tobacco industry: Florida (1997), Texas (1998), and Minnesota (1998).

» On November 23, 1998, the tobacco industry agreed to a 46-state Master Settlement Agreement, the largest settlement in history, totaling nearly $206 billion to be paid through the year 2025. The settlement agreement contained a number of important public health provisions.

» In April 1999, as part of the Master Settlement Agreement, the major US tobacco companies agreed to remove all advertising from outdoor and transit billboards across the nation. The remaining time on at least 3,000 billboard leases, valued at $100 million, was turned over to the states for posting anti-tobacco messages.

» On March 21, 2000, the US Supreme Court narrowly affirmed a 1998 decision of the US Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit and ruled that the FDA lacks jurisdiction under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to regulate tobacco products. As a result, the FDA’s proposed rule to reduce access and appeal of tobacco products for young people became invalid.

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Contact
Website nilesisters.org/fulstop
Email fulstop@nilesisters.org
Facebook @FULSTOPCA
Twitter @FulstopCa

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