

January 17, 2018

Harry Leider, MD
Chief Medical Officer
Walgreens Boots Alliance, Inc.
108 Wilmot Road
Deerfield, IL 60015

Dear Dr. Leider:

We the undersigned organizations write you to urge Walgreens to discontinue its practice of selling of tobacco consumer products.

Tobacco exacts a devastating toll on our society. Cigarette smoking causes more than 540,000 deaths each year in the United States.¹ Smoking costs the U.S. nearly \$170 billion each year in direct medical care costs for adults and more than \$156 billion in lost productivity due to premature death and exposure to secondhand smoke.^{2,3}

Smokers who want to quit face an extraordinary challenge to quit a product that is deliberately engineered by the tobacco industry for addiction. Research confirms that retail marketing, in-store advertising and displays are associated with compromising quit attempts and cause the initiation and progression of tobacco use among young people.⁴⁻⁹

Truth Initiative conducted an online study with 571 people who indicated they were a "Walgreens shopper"; 82% of respondents agreed that "the primary focus of stores with pharmacies should be to sell products that help people get and stay healthy" and 73% reported that they favor a Walgreens ban on tobacco sales.

Health advocates have called on Walgreens to stop selling tobacco for years. We are hopeful that 2018 will be the year that Walgreens recognizes and fully acts on the fact that tobacco has no place in a pharmacy setting. We request that Walgreens enact the following:

- Refrain from opposing policies that reduce tobacco use including those that require tobacco-free retailers and regulate retail licensing and density.
- Eliminate sales of tobacco products while continuing to sell FDA approved nicotine therapies.
- Employ pharmacy-based plans to assist smokers with quit attempts including cessation counseling.

We look forward to including Walgreens among the list of retailers that have opted to be part of the solution to our nation's tobacco epidemic by discontinuing the sale of tobacco products.

Signed,

**Action on Smoking and Health
American Medical Association
Americans for Nonsmokers Rights
American Lung Association
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
ClearWay Minnesota
American Cancer Society
Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids
National African American Tobacco Prevention Network**

**National Center on Health Research
Society Adolescent for Health and Medicine
SelfMade Health Network
The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Tobacco Control Network
Truth Initiative**

Attachments:

<https://truthinitiative.org/news/survey-walgreens-shoppers-want-tobacco-gone-stores>
https://truthinitiative.org/sites/default/files/Point-of-Sale-2017_0.pdf

Cc:

James A. Skinner, Executive Chairman, Walgreens Boots Alliance, Inc.
Stefano Pessina, Executive Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Walgreens Boots Alliance, Inc.
José (Joe) E. Almeida, Chairman of the Board and CEO, Baxter International Inc.
Janice M. Babiak, Former Managing Partner, Ernst & Young LLP
David J. Brailer, MD, Chairman, Health Evolution Partners
William C. Foote, Former Chairman and CEO, USG Corporation
Ginger L. Graham, Former President and Chief Executive Officer, Amylin Pharmaceuticals
John A. Lederer, Senior Advisor, Sycamore Partners
Dominic Murphy, Founder & CEO, 8C Capital LLP
Leonard D. Schaeffer
Judge Robert, Maclay Widney Chair and Professor, University of Southern California
Nancy M. Schlichting, Former Chief Executive Officer, Henry Ford Health System

References

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5. Hoek J, Gifford H, Pirikahu G, Thomson G, Edwards R. How do tobacco retail displays affect cessation attempts? Findings from a qualitative study. *Tobacco control*. 2010;19(4):334-337.
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7. Paynter J, Edwards R. The impact of tobacco promotion at the point of sale: a systematic review. *Nicotine & tobacco research : official journal of the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco*. 2009;11(1):25-35.

8. Robertson L, Cameron C, McGee R, Marsh L, Hoek J. Point-of-sale tobacco promotion and youth smoking: a meta-analysis. *Tobacco control*. 2016;25(e2):e83-e89.
9. Henriksen L, Schleicher NC, Feighery EC, Fortmann SP. A longitudinal study of exposure to retail cigarette advertising and smoking initiation. *Pediatrics*. 2010;126(2):232-238.