[THE CigarTrap.com]

They're cheap, often sold one at a time for under 70¢, less than an ice cream cone

CAMPAIGN for TOBACCO-FREE Kids

PRESS RELEASE

Maryland Officials Take Action to Protect Youth from Growing Threat of Flavored Cigars

Statement of Matthew L. Myers, President,
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, November 17, 2011

Washington, DC — Maryland health officials warned today of a growing threat to youth from the marketing of flavored little cigars, noting that cigar smoking among Maryland youth is climbing even as cigarette smoking has declined. We commend them for focusing attention on this important issue and launching a mass media campaign to warn kids and parents about this addictive and dangerous tobacco product.

Joshua M. Sharfstein, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, has been a leader in sounding the alarm about this emerging threat. Maryland data shows that more than 76 percent of underage cigar smokers in high school smoke flavored cigars, which come in kid-friendly flavors such as strawberry, watermelon, peach, vanilla and chocolate. The tobacco industry is barred from selling candy and fruit-flavored cigarettes, but not from using such flavors in cigars.

While cigarette smoking among Maryland high school students has dropped by nearly 40 percent since 2000, cigar use has climbed 11 percent during the same period. Small cigars can be purchased individually, sometimes for less than 70-cents, making them appealing and affordable to kids. In contrast, cigarettes can't be purchased individually and packs sell for upwards of $5.

We have come too far in the fight against youth smoking to allow tobacco companies to use these blatant tactics to target a new generation for tobacco addiction. This demonstrates the urgent need for the Food and Drug Administration, which has the authority to regulate tobacco products, to take appropriate action.

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