

Internists outline comprehensive federal strategy to control tobacco use

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"While tobacco use has decreased drastically over the last few decades, we still have a long way to go," American College of Physicians (ACP) President, J. Fred Ralston, Jr., MD, FACP, said as a new ACP policy monograph was released today. In Tobacco Control and Prevention, ACP called for a comprehensive federal strategy to control tobacco use, rather than the piecemeal actions being taken by states currently.

"A comprehensive tobacco control and prevention effort must be undertaken and consistently maintained to ensure that a new generation of smokers does not replace those who have quit or died because of their addiction," continued Dr. Ralston.

In the policy monograph, ACP outlined a set of recommendations that could form the basis for a comprehensive strategy:

- All states, with assistance from the federal government, should establish and adequately fund comprehensive tobacco control efforts to prevent [tobacco use](#) among young people; provide information about the dangers of tobacco products; minimize exposure to [secondhand smoke](#); and, help tobacco users quit.
- Public and private insurers should provide tobacco cessation and treatment benefits to qualifying individuals. Physicians should also help their patients quit.

- States should establish requirements that an appropriate portion of tobacco-generated revenue be directed toward tobacco control efforts.
- Youth tobacco education and prevention efforts must be enhanced and properly funded.
- The FDA should implement a ban on menthol flavoring in all tobacco products, as it has done with other flavor in cigarettes.
- State and local governments should establish smoke-free laws banning smoking in all nonresidential indoor areas. They should also work to control smoking in residential areas.
- Comprehensive efforts must seek to reduce the use of cigars and pipes, in addition to cigarettes.
- The FDA should be authorized to regulate electronic cigarettes until convincing evidence develops that they are not addictive.
- Tobacco use in movies and television should be discouraged, and the media industry should take responsibility to emphasize the dangers of tobacco use, particularly to young people.

"We already have a broad consensus on what needs to be done to reduce the tobacco problem," concluded Dr. Ralston. "We just need stakeholders to work to ensure that comprehensive [tobacco control](#) efforts receive the attention they need to succeed."

Provided by American College of Physicians

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