NYC proposes raising age for cigarette purchases (Update)

April 22 2013, by Jennifer Peltz

In this March 18, 2013 file photo cigarette packs are displayed for sale at a convenience store in New York. No one under 21 would be able to buy cigarettes in New York City under a proposal unveiled Monday, April 22, 2013 to make the city the most populous place in America to set the minimum age that high. (AP Photo/Mark Lennihan, file)

(AP)—After years of striving to set a national agenda for curbing smoking, New York City may set a new bar. Officials are proposing to make it the most populous place in America to raise the minimum age

for buying cigarettes to 21.

City Council Speaker Christine Quinn unveiled a proposal Monday to increase the threshold from 18. That's the federal minimum.

Four states and some communities have raised the age to 19. At least two towns have agreed to raise it to 21.

Quinn says the measure aims to stop young people from developing a potentially deadly habit. Officials say 80 percent of the city's adult smokers started before they were 21.

A retailers' group and a smokers' rights advocate are questioning the effectiveness and fairness of the proposal.

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Citation: NYC proposes raising age for cigarette purchases (Update) (2013, April 22) retrieved 23 April 2024 from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-04-nyc-age-cigarette.html

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