

US pharmacy giant CVS ends tobacco sales

September 3 2014

CVS, the leading US drug chain by sales, announced Wednesday that it had stopped selling tobacco products and was changing its name to reflect a greater focus on health.

CVS—which operates some 7,700 pharmacies—ended the sale of cigarettes, pipe tobacco and other products a month earlier than expected, cutting out a profit stream its competitors like Walgreens will continue to enjoy.

"The sale of tobacco in a retail pharmacy conflicts with the purpose of the [health care services](#) delivered there," said CVS chief medical officer Troyen Brennan.

"Even more important, there is evidence developing that indicates that removing [tobacco products](#) from retailers with pharmacies will lead to substantially lower rates of smoking with implications for reducing tobacco-related deaths."

At the same time, the company—with \$127 billion in revenues in 2013, including \$65 billion from prescriptions—announced a formal name change from CVS Caremark to CVS Health "to reflect its broader health care commitment."

"For our patients and customers, [health](#) is everything and CVS Health is changing the way [health care](#) is delivered to increase access, lower costs and improve quality," said company president and chief executive Larry Merlo.

CVS was cheered by the White House as "setting a powerful example that we hope others in the industry will follow."

First Lady Michelle Obama tweeted: "Congratulations and thank you, CVS Health. Creating a healthier future for our next generation is one good reason to live tobacco-free."

Democratic Senator Dick Durbin, who has long pushed for tougher regulations on tobacco, hailed the decision as one that could "help prevent kids from ever starting a deadly habit."

There was no immediate comment on tobacco sales from Walgreens, which leads CVS by the number of stores, with nearly 8,200, but lags in overall sales.

© 2014 AFP

Citation: US pharmacy giant CVS ends tobacco sales (2014, September 3) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-09-pharmacy-giant-cvs-tobacco-sales.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--