

MAKE QUITTING CONVENIENT MI



The Need for Equitable Access to Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) in all Michigan Communities

What's the problem?

Smoking cessation products in Michigan are not readily available at convenience stores, even though convenience stores are where [92% of all cigarettes are sold](#) in the state. In fact, [less than 3% of Nicotine Replacement Therapies \(NRTs\) are sold in convenience stores](#). This lack of access is not by accident. [Convenience stores are disproportionately located in low-income, minority communities](#), presenting barriers to quitting smoking for these residents and further [fueling disparities in tobacco use and its associated deleterious health effects](#).

What needs to be done?

With tobacco sales a [top source of revenue](#) for the convenience store industry, there is little incentive for the retailers to carry NRTs. In fact, [customers who smoke tend to be regulars at convenience stores](#). With these retailers [more densely located in neighborhoods with more low-income and marginalized residents](#), access to potentially lifesaving NRT products is not equitable. Michigan can increase access in these underserved communities by tapping into convenience stores to carry the products. That way, so all residents, regardless of where they live, will have access to the tools they need to help them quit smoking and improve their overall health.

Why does Michigan need legislation increasing equitable access to NRTs, NOW?

- **Lack of Access to NRTs in Convenience Stores is Disproportionately Impacting Low-Income, Minority Communities:** [Research](#) shows that a greater availability of and exposure to tobacco products, in part resulting from high retailer density and proximity, is associated with increased smoking rates in both [youth](#) and [adult](#) populations. Convenience stores—where 92% of all cigarettes and just 3% of NRTs are sold—are more densely located in neighborhoods with more low-income and marginalized residents, presenting barriers to quitting smoking and [further fueling disparities in tobacco use and its associated deleterious health effects](#).
- **Making NRTs More Accessible in Michigan Can Reduce Prevalence of Smoking**
 - [Studies](#) show using NRT can nearly double the chances of quitting smoking and [increases quit rates](#) from 50% to 70%.
 - NRT helps make quitting smoking easier by relieving acute nicotine cravings. Research shows that the average smoker starts to feel the symptoms of withdrawal [within an hour](#) of putting out their last cigarette.
 - [Almost half \(45.8%\) of quitting attempts are spontaneous](#), meaning that a smoker tries to quit as soon as they make the decision to do so. Selling NRTs at convenience stores alongside cigarettes could help support this spontaneous decision to quit, treat acute nicotine cravings, and prevent cigarette usage relapse.

- **The [Human and Financial Costs of Smoking in Michigan](#) Continue to Be Staggering**
 - Smoking-caused health care costs \$4.59 billion per year.
 - Smoking-caused losses in productivity amount to \$4.78 billion per year.
 - 16,200 adults in MI die each year of smoking related diseases.
 - 213,000 children now under 18 in MI will ultimately die prematurely from smoking.
 - [Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of disease, disability and death in the State of Michigan.](#)
 - Smokers hospitalized with COVID-19 are nearly 2X likely to die.

- **Cigarette Sales on the Rise for the First Time in Two Decades**
 - According to the Federal Trade Commission's annual [Cigarette Report](#), cigarette sales increased in 2020 for the first time in twenty years.