

A.G. Schneiderman Spearheads National Effort Calling On Major Pharmacies To Stop Selling Tobacco Products

A.G. Schneiderman And Ohio A.G. Ask Wal-Mart, Walgreens, Rite-Aid, Safeway And Kroger Pharmacies To Follow CVS' Lead

Schneiderman: Dangerous And Devastating Tobacco Products Shouldn't Be On The Shelves Of Stores That Serve Health Care Needs

NEW YORK – Attorney General Eric Schneiderman today joined Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine in leading an effort to persuade the largest pharmacy chains in the United States to stop selling tobacco products. Led by Attorney General Schneiderman and Attorney General DeWine, the Attorneys General of 28 states and territories have written to the CEOs of Wal-Mart, Walgreens (which also operates Duane Reade stores), Rite-Aid, Safeway and Kroger, asking them to remove any and all tobacco products from their shelves. In addition, 32 Attorneys General have commended CVS Caremark for its recent decision to stop selling tobacco in its stores.

“Pharmacies and drug stores, which increasingly market themselves as a source for community health care, send a mixed message by continuing to sell deadly tobacco products,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. “The fact that these stores profit from the sale of cigarettes and tobacco must take a backseat to the health of New Yorkers and customers across the country. I urge these companies to do the right thing and remove tobacco products from store shelves.”

“My fellow Attorneys General and I are asking these national retailers to take an additional step forward in keeping tobacco products away from youth by voluntarily not selling them in their stores with pharmacies,” Attorney General DeWine said. “The health of our kids is just too important.”

Tobacco-related disease is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, causing more than 480,000 deaths in the last year alone – more than AIDS, alcohol, illegal drug use, car accidents and firearm-related deaths combined. Since 1965, more than 20 million Americans

have died prematurely as a result of smoking. The devastating health effects of these tobacco products have been well documented for more than 50 years, since the 1964 Surgeon General's report on the health consequences of smoking.

Furthermore, health care costs and productivity losses attributable to smoking cost the nation at least \$289 billion each year. Almost 90% of all adult smokers start smoking by 18 years of age. "Big Tobacco" relies on getting young people addicted to cigarettes and keeping them as life-long smokers.

Attorney General Schneiderman has successfully undertaken a number of efforts to keep tobacco out of the hands of young New Yorkers. Under his leadership, the state's Tobacco Compliance Bureau has cracked down on websites illegally selling cigarettes, which provide teens with easy access to tobacco, and shut down so-called "roll your own" cigarette shops in New York City, which were popular among teenagers and young adults. The Attorney General's Criminal Prosecution Bureau has also taken down a cigarette trafficking ring that operated up and down the Eastern Seaboard.

In 1997, New York joined other states in suing the major tobacco companies for the harm their products caused. To resolve these lawsuits, the states entered into the 1998 Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement, the most significant public health agreement of our time.

<http://www.ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-spearheads-national-effort-calling-major-pharmacies-stop-selling>