

Press Release
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The Year in Review: SAFE Glen Cove Coalition and the Tobacco Action Coalition of Long Island

Upon reflection, 2020 despite the challenges of the Pandemic was another fruitful year for the Tobacco Action Coalition (TAC) and SAFE, Inc. in bringing tobacco awareness and working towards advancing a tobacco free community.

In their continuing efforts to curb youth initiation for the three major days of tobacco awareness; Kick Butts Day (KBD) World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) and the Great American Smoke-out (GASO), the two entities partnered with the Glen Cove School District and Glen Cove Youth Bureau for youth engagement activities. The programs drew attention to the need to reduce youth's exposure to tobacco marketing, the importance of the State's latest Legislative Initiative to protect youth from flavored e-cigarette liquids and other important measures, the dangers of all tobacco products; and how smoking makes one more vulnerable to contracting the Corona Virus.

SAFE's evidence-based Life Skills Training administered via the Youth Bureau's After 3 program also celebrated KBD prior to NYS Pause and then coordinated two novel interactive remote programs for WNTD and GASO. These programs help to maintain the ongoing education to keep the youth aware of the efforts and money the tobacco lobby spends to market their deadly products the teens are exposed to on a daily basis, and the dangers of emerging products. Youth Bureau Director, Spiro Tsirkas and SAFE Life Skills Trainer- Ms. Francesca Carbone successfully opened up the programming to elementary school age participants based on the alarming reality that the average age of onset for smoking is down to thirteen. TAC Manager- Ms. Carol Meschkow, a longtime Coalition partner was very pleased that after years of imparting knowledge about the issues of Point-of-Sale marketing, particularly in their trusted pharmacies; which motivated the youth into taking action by writing letters to their local editors, and elected representatives, and educating their peers, the teens felt a sense of pride to see a State-wide Pharmacy Ban come to fruition

The partners were able to share with the students and their families that this past April, Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York Assembly passed the State Budget for fiscal year 2021 that included a comprehensive tobacco control bill. The new regulations are as follows:

- Prohibit the redemption of coupons and manufacturer discounts; prohibit the sale of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, at pharmacies, making New York the second state with a tobacco-free pharmacy law.
- Prohibit retailers in New York from selling e-cigarettes with 'characterizing flavor', unless these products have received pre-market approval from the Food and Drug Administration.
- Restrict the exterior display of tobacco and vape products and advertising near schools.
- Raise retailer penalties for illegal sales to minors.

Further, the bill attempts to create more uniform regulation of e-cigarettes and vape products by restricting the delivery of e-liquid products to only state-licensed vapor retailers (effectively ending online sales), requiring manufacturers of vape products to disclose ingredients, and allowing certain carrier oils to be banned from products if deemed harmful. With exception of the flavored e-cigarette regulation, which went into effect May 19, 2020, enforcement of all the above regulations began in July. The latest regulation has been further supported by language in the omnibus federal budget bill to include the prohibition of mailing electronic

cigarettes via US Postal Service, and it adds e-cigarettes to the list of tobacco products that must comply with the Prevent All Cigarette Trafficking Act, (Provisions include: labeling all tobacco packages, pay state excise tax, and require signature of person 21 or older).

This year SAFE and TAC decided to build upon the students' knowledge of the health consequences of smoking and second-hand smoke and the impact on the surrounding environment for the GASO celebration by focusing on the benefits of Tobacco Free Outdoors. This was especially timely with the correlation between smoking and Covid-19 per the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Smoking compromises the immune system and harms the airway lining cells that contain cilia which is our primary defense against viruses like Covid-19.

Local stakeholders, elected representative, the Glen Cove Interagency Council as well as the faith based community were invited to view the on-line event, and in advance of the programming to raise awareness of the partnership's goal to expand their list of community stakeholders who have already adopted policies, and to apprise them of the youth's passion to garner their support in protecting themselves, classmates, families and neighbors from second-hand and drifting smoke. For the last fifteen years the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition and TAC have collaborated together to advance tobacco free living across the city through a network of local business, organizations and multi-unit housing complexes who have implemented tobacco free practices. Ms. Meschkow made a brief presentation for the heads of local organizations at a meeting that is regularly attended by Dr. Harris, Executive Director of SAFE, Spiro Tsirkas and Francesca Carbone. Carol enlightened the community leaders on TAC's Tobacco Free Outdoor Campaign, and the significance of the link between smoking and the Virus along with all the other associated health impacts of these toxins polluting their environment.

TAC has been busy working with the Coalition attending strategic planning sessions, and offering evidence based research, statistics, resources from the American Lung Association and the NYS Quitline, and helpful links and legislative news to keep Coalition Members and local families informed.

TAC is funded by the NYS TCP through a grant funded by the American Lung Association and as such were able to extend their support with many valuable facts on smoking and its correlation to Covid-19, lung health and implications for vulnerable cohorts, particularly those with less access to health care. This salient information was distributed via email, outreach to local media and elected officials and shared among community group's lists. Many resources were offered bilingual as well.

To learn more about the harmful effects of tobacco visit: www.tobaccofreenys.org or for help with quitting contact the NYS Quitline at: 1-866-NY-QUITS

SAFE, Inc. is the only alcohol and substance abuse prevention, intervention and education agency in the City of Glen Cove. Its Coalition is concerned about tobacco use and vaping seeking to educate and update the community regarding its negative consequences. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit the Vaping Facts and Myths Page of SAFE's website to learn more about how vaping is detrimental to your health www.safeglencove.org.