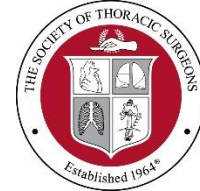
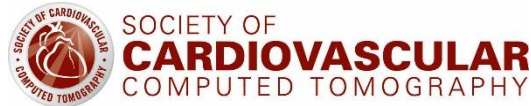




AMERICAN COLLEGE of CARDIOLOGY



June 3, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
U.S. Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tim Kaine  
U.S. Senate  
231 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Senator Kaine,

The undersigned organizations, representing cardiovascular clinicians across the United States, write to express our strong support for S. 1541, the *Tobacco-Free Youth Act*. Thank you for introducing this important legislation to address a crippling public health crisis that is threatening to diminish the many years of progress our country has made in reducing tobacco use.

As the cardiovascular provider community, we recognize reducing youth tobacco usage as a shared goal. As you know, tobacco use has long been associated with cardiovascular disease, and is responsible for nearly one in four deaths.<sup>1</sup> A recent study found smoking is associated with a thickening of the heart and lowers the heart’s pumping ability – both of which are associated with heart failure.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the longer individuals without heart disease smoked, combined with the amount of cigarettes consumed, the greater the damage to their hearts’ structure and function. Finally, e-cigarettes, which have been growing in popularity, especially among minors, are as harmful to the heart as smoking combustible cigarettes.<sup>3</sup>

The *Tobacco-Free Youth Act* will help prevent chronic disease and protect public health by restricting youth access to tobacco products. Young adults are most vulnerable to social and environmental influences, as the U.S. Surgeon General report states that 99% of smokers begin

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/50th-anniversary/pdfs/fs\\_smoking\\_CVD\\_508.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/50th-anniversary/pdfs/fs_smoking_CVD_508.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/full/10.1161/CIRCIMAGING.116.004950>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cardiosmart.org/Healthy-Living/Stop-Smoking/Smoking-and-Heart-Disease>

using tobacco by their mid-20s.<sup>4</sup> It is also estimated that 1 in 5 high school students and 1 in 20 middle school students use e-cigarettes.<sup>5</sup> We wholeheartedly support reducing youth access to tobacco products and believe the *Tobacco-Free Youth Act* will make positive steps toward that end.

Our organizations applaud your leadership on this important issue and look forward to helping advance legislation to further reduce youth tobacco use across the country. We stand ready to partner with you and other stakeholders to achieve that goal.

Sincerely,

American College of Cardiology  
American Society of Echocardiography  
American Society of Nuclear Cardiology  
Association of Black Cardiologists  
Heart Failure Society of America  
Heart Rhythm Society  
Society for Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance  
Society for Vascular Medicine  
Society of Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions  
Society of Cardiovascular Computed Tomography  
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/reports-and-publications/tobacco/preventing-youth-tobacco-use-factsheet/index.html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/surgeon-generals-advisory-on-e-cigarette-use-among-youth-2018.pdf>