

ALTRIA

WHEREAS:

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), in 2015 an estimated 15.1% (36.5 million U.S. adults were current cigarette smokers. Of these 75.7% (27.6 million) smoked every day;

Both cigarettes and e-cigarettes contain nicotine, a highly addictive drug;

A US government fact sheet on drugabuse.gov states: “The nicotine in any tobacco product readily absorbs into the blood when a person uses it. Upon entering the blood, nicotine immediately stimulates the adrenal glands to release the hormone epinephrine (adrenaline). Epinephrine stimulates the central nervous system and increases blood pressure, breathing, and heart rate. As with drugs such as cocaine and heroin, nicotine increases levels of the chemical messenger dopamine, which affects parts of the brain that control reward and pleasure. Studies suggest that other chemicals in tobacco smoke, such as acetaldehyde, may enhance nicotine’s effects on the brain... Although nicotine is addictive, most of the severe health effects of tobacco use come from other chemicals.”

In July 2017, FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb announced a proposal to cut the level of nicotine in cigarettes to non-addictive levels – what *Bloomberg Business Week* called “the most sweeping effort to reduce smoking in the US since 1965.”

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued an advanced notice of a proposed rule in March that would reduce nicotine in all cigarettes and possibly other burned tobacco products sold in the U.S. to minimally addictive levels. Reducing nicotine in cigarettes does not make the cigarette safer, but because nicotine is the addictive chemical in tobacco, nicotine reduction would reduce the progression towards tobacco dependence and make it easier for smokers to quit smoking.

A new study conducted by the University of Minnesota and eight additional institutions recently published in the *JAMA* adds to the accumulating evidence to support this proposal and addresses whether a gradual reduction or a targeted immediate reduction in nicotine in cigarettes is the best approach.

Key findings include:

- Immediate nicotine reduction is likely to result in more rapid positive public health effects.
- Smokers in the immediate reduction group experienced significantly less exposure to toxic cigarette smoke chemicals and reported smoking fewer cigarettes per day.

RESOLVED: Shareholders request the Board take steps to preserve the health of its tobacco-using customers by making available to them information on the nicotine levels for each of our cigarette brands and begin reducing nicotine levels in our brands to a less addictive level.

SUPPORTING STATEMENT: Commissioner Gottlieb stated: “Unless we change course, 5.6 million children alive today will die prematurely later in life from tobacco use. A renewed focus on nicotine can help us to achieve a world where cigarettes no longer addict future generations of our kids; and where adults who still need or want nicotine can get it from alternative and less harmful sources.”

We expect our company to be involved in the public debate on the FDA’s proposal and urge it to play a positive role in reducing the addictiveness of cigarettes and other combusted tobacco products.