

## **PolitickerNJ**

### **Pallone Calls on Pharmacies to Stop Selling Tobacco Products**

Raymond Zaccaro, May 15 2014

HAZLET, NJ – Today, Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) visited the CVS/pharmacy in Hazlet, New Jersey to call on chain pharmacies across the country to stop selling cigarettes and tobacco products in their stores. The tobacco epidemic is still threatening individual and public health in the United States, with millions of adults in this country dying prematurely every year as a result of smoking. Pallone highlighted the roles that both the private and public sectors must play in order to effectively combat tobacco use that continues to take a tremendous toll on the health of Americans.

In February, CVS Caremark, the largest integrated pharmacy company in the United States, announced that it planned to stop selling cigarettes and other tobacco products in all of its CVS/pharmacy stores by October 1, 2014. Last month, Pallone sent a letter to the National Association of Chain Drug Stores, urging their member retailers to follow CVS' lead and stop selling cigarettes and other tobacco products in their stores due to the risks that they pose to public health.

“Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States,” said Congressman Pallone. “It is responsible for an estimated 443,000 deaths each year and costs our nation \$96 billion in health care costs. The decision to remove tobacco products from the shelves of local pharmacies shows a real commitment to improving the health of consumers, and I applaud CVS taking that step. We have an obligation to protect our young people, and we must all share in this responsibility so that the next generation is not burdened by the immense health and economic costs of tobacco. Making these harmful products less available is an important step in the right direction.”

Pallone was joined by community leaders and public health advocates also working to tackle the issue of nicotine addiction, including Thomas Moriarty, Executive Vice President and Chief Health Strategy Officer of CVS Caremark, Ethan Hasbrouck New Jersey Director of Government Relations for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, Deborah Brown, President and CEO of the American Lung Association of the Mid-Atlantic, and Hazlet Councilwoman Barbara Ronchetti.

“We thank Congressman Pallone for his leadership on tobacco-related policies. Our decision to end the sale of tobacco products underscores our role in the evolving health care field and is consistent with our purpose of helping people on their path to better health,” said Thomas Moriarty of CVS Caremark. “Tobacco products have no place in a setting where health care is delivered. As pharmacies are becoming more involved in the support of care for chronic diseases made worse by smoking, it is clear that removing tobacco products from our stores is the right thing to do.”

“We know that policies that restrict access to tobacco products, reduce exposure to tobacco advertising, and limit the places that people smoke have a direct effect on reduced smoking rates, especially among youth. That is what makes CVS Caremark's move to stop the sale of tobacco products in all of its stores so significant,” said Ethan Hasbrouck, New Jersey director of government relations, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. “Community pharmacists play a key role in health and wellness and CVS Caremark has taken a bold step to demonstrate its commitment to healthy lifestyles and the prevention of disease.”

“The American Lung Association has been a leader in the battle against tobacco, which is the leading cause of preventable illness and death in the United States,” said Deb Brown, President and CEO of the American Lung Association of the Mid-Atlantic. “Reducing access and availability of tobacco products will help our Association reach its goal to eliminate tobacco caused death and

disease. We commend CVS and support Congressman Pallone's ask of other retailers to make the right decision to stop selling tobacco."

Pallone has consistently drawn attention to the dangers of tobacco products and nicotine. Recently, he called on the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to release regulations regarding the manufacture, distribution, and marketing of Electronic Cigarettes, also known as e-cigarettes. The FDA finally issued proposed regulations regarding the manufacture and sale of e-cigarettes and other tobacco products in April. Congressman Pallone has also expressed serious concern regarding marketing tactics being employed by some e-cigarette companies, which are similar to those previously used by tobacco companies to appeal to younger people, such as through candy flavoring, cartoon images, and event sponsorships.

In January, Pallone admonished the Christie Administration for eliminating New Jersey's Comprehensive Tobacco Control Program, a statewide effort to establish smoke-free policies, help tobacco users quit smoking and prevent potential users from becoming addicted.

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