

Letter: Upping age for sale of tobacco a smart move

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I am thrilled to learn that Orange County Executive Steven Neuhaus has signed a bill that will raise the age for the sale of cigarettes, e-cigarettes and tobacco products to 21. This bill was recently passed by the county legislature.

I have been caring for cancer patients for over 30 years in Orange County and have witnessed firsthand the effects of the cancers that are attributed to smoking. Talking to these patients I have often found that they started smoking very young. Approximately 95 percent of adults who smoke started before the age of 21. Increasing the age for the sale of tobacco products is a promising strategy in the effort to keep kids from beginning this deadly addiction and may decrease their risk of many cancers and other chronic diseases.

Sadly, almost 16 percent of adults in Orange County smoke. In passing this bill the legislature has demonstrated an understanding of the importance of protecting county residents and our kids from the dangers of smoking. Raising the legal age for the sale of tobacco products to 21 is a logical, sensible step that would better protect our youth. I urge County Executive Neuhaus to enforce it. I also look forward to working with him on other health issues in the future.

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