



March 31, 2016

Robert D. Manfred Jr., Commissioner
 Major League Baseball
 245 Park Avenue, 31st Floor
 New York, NY 10167

Tony Clark, Executive Director
 Major League Baseball Players Association
 12 East 49th Street, 24th Floor
 New York, NY 10017

Dear Commissioner Manfred and Mr. Clark:

With cities and states across America moving to prohibit the use of smokeless tobacco at sports venues, including baseball stadiums, we are writing to urge Major League Baseball (MLB) and the Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA) to agree to prohibit the use of all tobacco products by players, managers, coaches, other personnel and fans at all MLB venues. Given the devastating toll of tobacco use on America's children and families, it is vitally important that baseball set the right example for young fans and prohibit the use of this dangerous product.

Smokeless tobacco use by MLB players endangers the health of impressionable youth who follow their lead, as well as the players themselves. It sets a terrible example for the millions of young people who watch baseball and see their favorite players and managers using tobacco. The

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has noted, “Athletes serve as role models for youth, and smokeless tobacco manufacturers have used advertising, images, and testimonials featuring athletes and sports to make smokeless tobacco products appear attractive to youth.”

Recent headlines have driven home the seriousness of the problem. Hall of Famer Tony Gwynn died in June 2014 at age 54 after a long battle with salivary gland cancer, which he attributed to his longtime use of chewing tobacco. Just two months later, pitching great Curt Schilling, only 47, announced his treatment for oral cancer that he said was “without a doubt, unquestionably” caused by 30 years of chewing tobacco.

In response, the great baseball cities of San Francisco, Boston, Los Angeles, Chicago and New York have enacted ordinances prohibiting the use of smokeless tobacco at sports venues, including their Major League stadiums. The state of California has enacted a similar, statewide law. Many of these measures will be in effect by the start of the 2016 season. Once all these laws are implemented, smokeless tobacco use will be prohibited in fully a third of MLB stadiums, and other MLB cities are considering such action.

Our organizations are committed to advocating for these ordinances city by city until all of Major League Baseball is tobacco-free. But we hope that will not be necessary. We strongly urge MLB and the MLBPA to realize the inevitability of tobacco-free baseball and to agree to a complete prohibition on smokeless tobacco use in all major league stadiums as part of the next collective bargaining agreement being negotiated this year.

Tobacco remains the No. 1 preventable cause of death in the United States, and for years, our health organizations have called for an end to smokeless tobacco in baseball. Public health experts – including the CDC, the U.S. Surgeon General, the U.S. National Cancer Institute and the World Health Organization – have all concluded that smokeless tobacco use is dangerous. Smokeless tobacco contains at least 28 known carcinogens and has been found to cause oral, pancreatic and esophageal cancer, nicotine addiction and other serious health problems like gum disease, tooth decay and mouth lesions. The evidence is overwhelming; the time to act is now.

Smokeless tobacco companies spent \$503.2 million on marketing in 2013 (the most recent data available), much of it appealing to children. Smokeless tobacco use in baseball reinforces the industry’s message that teen boys cannot be real men unless they chew. The statistical evidence is strong as well. According to a September 2015 CDC report, high school athletes use smokeless tobacco at nearly twice the rate of non-athletes, and smokeless tobacco use among athletes increased more than 11 percent from 2001 to 2013, even as smoking rates dropped significantly. Among male high school athletes, smokeless tobacco use is particularly alarming at 17.4 percent in 2013.

A prohibition on all tobacco use within baseball facilities will not affect what players can do in their personal lives, although they should be encouraged to quit using tobacco for their own health. Baseball stadiums, however, are workplaces and public places. It is entirely appropriate to restrict the use of a harmful substance in such a setting. While players are on the job, they have a responsibility to set the right example for kids.

Our national pastime should be about promoting a healthy and active lifestyle, not a deadly and addictive product. For the millions of children and families who love baseball and revere their favorite players, and for the health of the players themselves, we urge MLB and the MLBPA to remove all tobacco use from baseball. We look forward to hearing from you about this important issue. Please contact us through Matthew Myers at the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids at 202-296-5469 or mmyers@tobaccofreekids.org.

Sincerely,

Academy of General Dentistry
Action on Smoking and Health
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Oral & Maxillofacial Pathology
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for Respiratory Care
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American College of Cardiology
American Heart Association
American Lung Association
American Medical Association
American Public Health Association
American School Health Association
American Society of Clinical Oncology
Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights
Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy and Leadership
Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
Cancer Prevention and Treatment Fund
ClearWay Minnesota
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America
Eta Sigma Gamma | National Health Education Honorary
March of Dimes
National African American Tobacco Prevention Network
National Latino Alliance for Health Equity
Oncology Nursing Society
Oral Health America
Prevention Institute
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Society for Public Health Education
The Society of State Leaders of Health and Physical Education
The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
Trust for America's Health
Truth Initiative