

FORBES: 7/06/2016

Two Years After The Ban: How CVS Continues To Take On Tobacco



Susan McPherson , Women@Forbes

When CVS announced its plans to ban cigarette sales in 2014, the media took note. It was one of the most widely covered corporate social responsibility stories in recent memory – and for good reason. CVS's choice was bold, risky and scrutinized by many. Two years later, CVS's commitment to curbing tobacco use hasn't wavered – quite the contrary, in fact. The company recently launched *Be The First*, a \$50 million initiative to help deliver the first tobacco-free generation.

As senior vice president of corporate social responsibility and philanthropy for CVS Health, and president of the CVS Health Foundation, **Eileen Howard Boone** has been instrumental in shaping and evolving the company's tobacco prevention initiatives. We sat down with her to find out more about *Be the First* and lessons learned from the initial ban in 2014.



Can you give us an overview of your role and explain how CSR is structured at CVS?

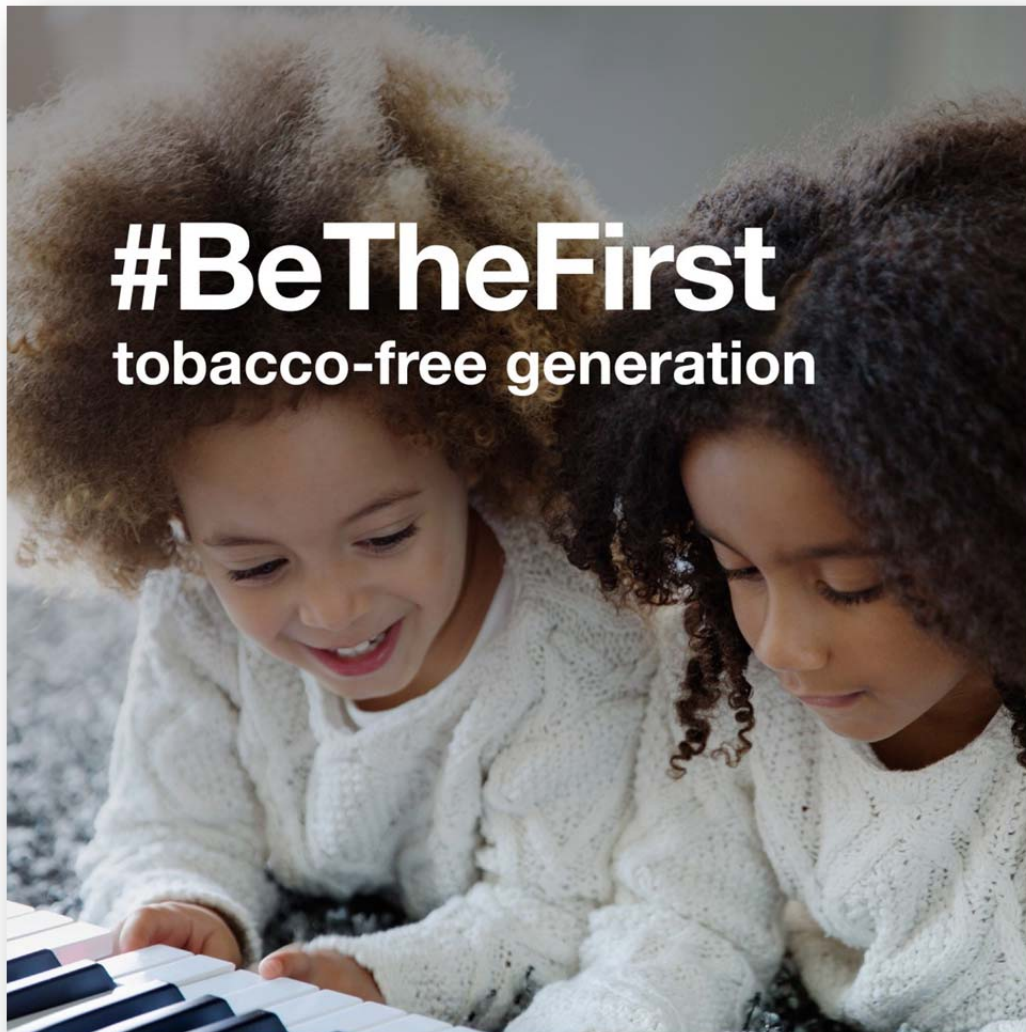
I have a role at CVS Health that is both challenging and rewarding at the same time. I'm responsible for formulating the strategic positioning of the company's corporate social responsibility platform, which we call our *Prescription for a Better World*. Our work is organized across three focus areas: building healthier communities, protecting the planet and creating economic opportunities. In this role, I also direct more than \$80 million in charitable funding for philanthropic programs. Ultimately, our goal is to increase access to health care for underserved populations, improve quality of care and patient outcomes, and reduce costs on the health care system.

Tell us about CVS's new initiative, *Be The First*.

We are at a critical moment in our nation's efforts to end the epidemic of tobacco use, which is the leading cause of preventable death and threatens the health and well-being of our next generation. *Be The First* is a five-year, \$50 million initiative to help deliver the first tobacco-free generation and advances a broader commitment to helping people lead tobacco-free lives.

Be The First consists of comprehensive education, advocacy, tobacco control and healthy behavior programming that is delivered by a group of national partner organizations and directed at youth and young adults who use tobacco or are at risk of becoming tobacco users. It is also focused on continuing to support cessation programs for entrenched adult smokers who expose children to tobacco use in the home or in public venues that still permit tobacco-use.

We believe our initiative can have a meaningful impact on the health of our country and move us one step closer to delivering the first tobacco-free generation as measured by: a 10% decline in the number of new youth smokers; a doubling of the number of tobacco-free educational institutions; and a 3% decline in the national youth smoking rate.



CVS made headlines when it decided to make stores tobacco-free in 2014. Why did the company decide to tackle this issue? It was a risky move; was it challenging to gain buy-in internally?

We knew that removing cigarettes and other tobacco products from our stores was simply the right thing to do for the good of our customers, our colleagues and our company. We are proud to be the first, and to remain the only, national pharmacy chain to take this step. I am so proud of our company and believe we will continue to look back on our exit from tobacco as a truly seminal moment in our company's history, evolution and continued success.

It's been almost two years since the ban was announced. Can you tell us about its impact? Any lessons learned?

On the one-year anniversary of when we officially removed tobacco from stores, [we released data](#) (see below; September 3, 2015) demonstrating the positive impact our decision had made on public health overall. The study, conducted by the CVS Health Research Institute, evaluated cigarette pack purchases at other various retailers in the eight months after CVS Pharmacy stopped selling tobacco products. The data showed a 1% reduction in cigarette pack sales in states where CVS Pharmacy had a 15% or greater share of the retail pharmacy market, compared to states with no CVS Pharmacy stores. Over the same eight-month period, the average smoker in these states purchased five fewer cigarette packs and, in total, approximately 95 million fewer packs were sold.

Our move also motivated hundreds of thousands of smokers to seek out our pharmacists for cessation counseling and therapy, which we continue to report on.

Our own actions as a company to eliminate the sale of tobacco products in our retail stores and our philanthropic support showed that we could have an impact on smoking rates nationally, but there was more that we could do. This is what inspired us to develop and implement our *Be The First* initiative.

How do you think CSR has changed in recent years, both in terms of CVS's approach and general industry trends?

Nearly 10 years ago, our company embarked on a journey to formally define and shape our approach to CSR. We have come a long way, and we are driven by a strong belief that our purpose of helping people on their path to better health is not just about social and environmental responsibility, but also a way to align with our long-term growth plans and key business objectives. We are fortunate to have a wide circle of key stakeholders who care about CVS Health and actively encourage us to advance our CSR commitments. Engagement is the key to maintaining and strengthening these relationships. Our CSR strategy continues to play a bigger and more significant role in supporting our business, while delivering more value and impact to the customers and communities we serve.

CVS Health Marks First Anniversary of Tobacco Removal With New Data on Decision's Impact, Extends Commitment to Creating Tobacco-Free Generation

Thursday, **September 3, 2015**

New Data Shows Reduction in Cigarette Purchases Across All Retailers

CVS Health and its Foundation Announce School-based Tobacco-prevention Program

WOONSOCKET, R.I., Sept. 3, 2015 – CVS Health (NYSE: CVS) today marked the first anniversary of ending tobacco sales at CVS/pharmacy by releasing new data showing a measurable reduction in cigarette purchases over the past year. The company also announced it is renewing its commitment to creating a tobacco-free generation through a joint initiative between CVS Health, its Foundation and Scholastic to launch a school-based tobacco-prevention program.

“One year ago, we stopped selling tobacco products because it conflicted with our purpose of helping people on their path to better health,” said Troyen A. Brennan, M.D., M.P.H., Chief Medical Officer, CVS Health. “Today, we are excited to release new data demonstrating the positive impact our decision has had on public health overall as shown by a measurable decrease in the number of cigarette purchases across all retailers.”

The study, conducted by the CVS Health Research Institute, evaluated cigarette pack purchases at drug, food, big box, dollar, convenience and gas station retailers in the eight months after CVS/pharmacy stopped selling tobacco products. The study found an additional one percent reduction in cigarette pack sales in states where CVS/pharmacy had a 15 percent or greater share of the retail pharmacy market, compared to states with no CVS/pharmacy stores. Over the same eight-month period, the average smoker in these states purchased five fewer cigarette packs and, in total, approximately 95 million fewer packs were sold.

Further bolstering the impact of CVS/pharmacy's tobacco removal, the CVS Health Research Institute study showed a four percent increase in nicotine patch purchases in the states with a CVS/pharmacy market share of 15 percent or more, in the period immediately following the end of tobacco sales. This indicates that there was also a positive effect on attempts to quit smoking.

“We know that more than two-thirds of smokers want to quit – and that half of smokers try to quit each year. We also know that cigarette purchases are often spontaneous.

And so we reasoned that removing a convenient location to buy cigarettes could decrease overall tobacco use,” Brennan said. “This new data demonstrates that CVS Health’s decision to stop selling tobacco did indeed have a real public health impact.” The impact of CVS Health’s tobacco cessation efforts can also be measured in the reach of its pharmacists and nurse practitioners, who have worked to support customers’ efforts to quit smoking. Since September 3, 2014, the average number of MinuteClinic “Start to Stop” smoking cessation visits conducted per month nearly doubled. CVS pharmacists counseled more than 260,000 patients about smoking cessation and filled nearly 600,000 Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) prescriptions. The company also distributed millions of smoking cessation informational brochures and hundreds of thousands of “Last Pack” toolkits, and educated more than one million people via its Online Cessation Hub on CVS.com.

In the year since removing tobacco products, CVS Health also made a significant commitment to philanthropic giving and strategic partnerships, pledging more than \$1 million in corporate grants to tobacco cessation and prevention programs. CVS Health and its Foundation also built on partnerships with organizations leading the fight against tobacco and supporting those living with its health consequences including Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, Stand Up To Cancer, and American Lung Association’s LUNGFORCE.

In celebration of the past year’s success, CVS Health has made new commitments to further its impact in the coming years. Today, CVS Health and its Foundation also announced a strategic initiative with Scholastic, the global children’s publishing, education and media company, to introduce a new, school-based program aimed at preventing youth smoking and teaching children about the health consequences of tobacco use.

“Over the last year, CVS Health has created partnerships with community organizations across the country that are dedicated to helping people quit smoking and communicating the importance of never starting tobacco use,” said Eileen Howard Boone, Senior Vice President, Corporate Social Responsibility and Philanthropy, CVS Health and President, CVS Health Foundation. “Today, we are proud to mark our one-year anniversary by building on our commitment to be a meaningful part of the effort to make the next generation tobacco-free. By partnering with an expert in education to launch this new program, we will reach millions of kids across the country with critical tobacco-prevention education.”

The program will reach nearly three million children in grades three, four and five when it begins this fall, with a second component offered in some pilot markets for young adults in grades six and seven to be introduced in early 2016. It will include classroom resources for teachers and students as well as take-home components that give parents the opportunity to talk to their children about smoking. The middle school component will include a student engagement program, with the chance to receive incentives such as scholarships and youth-focused community training.

About CVS Health

CVS Health quit tobacco and we helped smokers quit, too



CVS Health is committed to helping people on their path to better health. Selling tobacco conflicted with our purpose, so in 2014, we removed tobacco products from CVS/pharmacy[®] retail locations nationwide.

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the US. Smoking causes:



We believed that restricting access to tobacco would have a positive impact on public health. **And it did.**

To measure that impact, we evaluated:

- Sales of cigarette packs
- Unit sales of nicotine patch packages

In states where CVS/pharmacy has greater than 15% market share*:



Cigarette pack sales



over the 8 months since the tobacco removal

That's 5 fewer packs per smoker and 95M fewer packs overall[†]

Unit sales of nicotine patch packages



in the month following the tobacco removal

That's an additional 5 packages sold for every 1K smokers



We are committed to helping smokers quit.

We know that nearly 70% of smokers have the desire to quit[‡] and we want them to be successful. Because not every smoker will succeed with the same approach, we offer a variety of services and resources:



Smoking cessation education through the MinuteClinic Start to Stop[®] program, which has nearly doubled the number of monthly visits[§]



CVS pharmacists, who have counseled more than 260K patients and filled nearly 600K nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) prescriptions[¶]



OTC nicotine replacement products



Dedicated quitline and Online Cessation Hub on CVS.com

Discover more:
www.cvshealth.com



*In states where CVS/pharmacy has greater than 15% market share. Sources:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. QuickStats: number of deaths from 10 leading causes - National Vital Statistics System, United States, 2010. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. 2013;62:1.
2. Impact of the CVS tobacco sales removal on smoking cessation: when CVS Health quit tobacco, many smokers quit. *Int J Public Health*. 2014;59:100-104.
3. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/tobacco_use_statistics/index.htm. The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, US: Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014.
4. CVS Health internal data. Sept. 2014 - Sept. 2015.

CVS Health is a pharmacy innovation company helping people on their path to better health. Through its 7,800 retail pharmacies, nearly 1,000 walk-in medical clinics, a leading pharmacy benefits manager with more than 70 million plan members, and expanding specialty pharmacy services, the company enables people, businesses and communities to manage health in more affordable, effective ways. This unique integrated model increases access to quality care, delivers better health outcomes and lowers overall health care costs. Find more information about how CVS Health is shaping the future of health at www.cvshealth.com.

Media Contacts:
Erin Shields Britt
(401) 770-9237
Erin.Britt@CVSHealth.com

Carolyn Castel
(401) 770-5717
Carolyn.Castel@CVSHealth.com