

Mayor Proposes Banishing Tobacco Products From Sight At Stores

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Out of sight, out of mind — that's how Mayor Michael Bloomberg wants to reduce smoking rates among youth in the nation's biggest city.

Bloomberg announced today that he's going to push for new anti-tobacco restrictions, including a first-in-the-country law that would mandate retail stores hide away tobacco products except during sales to adults or when they are being restocked.

He said the bill tackles the pervasive in-store marketing of tobacco products to young people.

"New York City has dramatically lowered our smoke rate," Bloomberg said in a statement. "But even one new smoker is one too many — especially when it's a young person."

Health Commissioner Dr. Thomas Farley said the adult smoking rate had decreased from 21.5 percent in 2002 to 14.8 percent in 2011. But he said "youth smoking rates have remained flat at 8.5 percent since 2007."

Bloomberg announced the new anti-tobacco push at Queens Hospital Center, where he was joined by the city's health commissioner, City Council members and leaders of groups working to reduce smoking rates.

Another bill would prohibit the sale of discounted tobacco products to create a "price floor" for cigarette packs and small cigars.

Both bills will be introduced at Wednesday's stated Council meeting.

The new public health proposals comes just days after a court's rejection of Bloomberg's signature ban on large sugary drinks.

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