RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT THE NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESCIND
PREEMPTION OF TOBACCO REGULATION, INCLUDING ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES, AND
 THEREFORE RESTORE LOCAL CONTROL OVER TOBACCO POLICIES

WHEREAS, the health consequences of smoking are staggering, and there is irrefutable evidence
that tobacco use causes cancer, respiratory and cardiac diseases, infertility, negative birth
outcomes, irritations to the eyes, nose and throat (U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services, 2014); and

WHEREAS, the economic losses in health care expenditures are equally important and the use of
tobacco products cost the U.S. as much as $170 billion in health care expenditures each year (Xu,
Bishop, Kennedy, Simpson, & Pechacek, 2014); and

WHEREAS, nearly 90% of all smokers begin smoking before the age of eighteen (Centers for
Disease Control and Prevention, 2014); and

WHEREAS, in North Carolina, 1 in every 10 middle school students is a current tobacco user and
3 in every 10 high school students is a current tobacco user; and

 WHEREAS, in North Carolina, 8,676 middle school students currently smoke cigarettes; and
55,688 high school students currently smoke cigarettes; (North Carolina Tobacco Prevention and
Control Branch); and

WHEREAS, there is supportive evidence that increasing the minimum legal age of purchase to 21
will save more lives, reduce initiation among adolescents and young adults, and immediately
improve the health of adolescents, young adults and young mothers who would be deterred from
smoking, as well as their children (Institute of Medicine, 2015); and

WHEREAS, we believe in the need to educate and empower youth about the harmful effects of
tobacco use and prohibit these incidences of purchase until the conscious age of 21 years; and

WHEREAS, penalties included in G.S 14-313 Youth access to tobacco products, tobacco-derived
products, vapor products, and cigarette wrapping papers would remain the same; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of the damaging effects of preemption and the importance of community
tobacco control policies, both the Healthy People 2010 and the Healthy People 2020 objectives,
which are developed by the Department of Health and Human Services to set the national public
health agenda for each decade, include an objective calling for the elimination of all state laws that
preempt local tobacco control policies (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2013).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Orange County Board of Health requests that the North
Carolina General Assembly restore local control over tobacco policies by rescinding preemption;
therefore, granting Orange County the legal authority to protect residents from known public health
threats by enacting innovative, evidence-based policies such as an increase in the minimum sale
age of tobacco products from 18 to 21. The lifting of preemption reinstates local capacity to
develop public policy and revitalizes community debate, education and empowerment.
FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, that we also call on other Boards of Health to request the
restoration of local control over tobacco policies so as to better help prevent youth initiation.

Susan Elmore, Chair
Orange County Board of Health

Colleen Bridger, MPH, PhD
Orange County Health Director

References

http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/youth_data/tobacco_use/


U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2013, April 5). State Preemption of Local Authority to Engage in Evidence-Based Tobacco Control Policies. Retrieved March 17, 2015, from NC Alliance for Health:
