

## CVS decides to discontinue sale of tobacco products

BY ROBERT PACHECO  
STAFF WRITER

You know that ironic feeling you get when you walk into a pharmacy to buy cigarettes? It may soon be a thing of the past.

On Feb. 5, CVS Caremark, the nation's second largest pharmacy chain, announced plans to eliminate the sale of tobacco products in their stores.

"The plan is to stop selling tobacco products by Oct. 1," CVS Store Manager Colt Sharpe told The Guilfordian. "We will be first national drugstore chain in the United States to no longer sell cigarettes."

The move to eliminate the sale of tobacco products is popular among nonsmokers and health care advocates.

According to Reuters, President Barack Obama, a former smoker, praised CVS,

saying that the decision will enhance broader efforts to reduce tobacco-related deaths, cancer and heart disease.

"Pharmacies shouldn't provide products detrimental to your health," said Irene Sullivan, former CVS employee. "That's why it's illegal to sell heroin and cocaine, two items that were commonly sold by pharmacies 100 years ago."

Although this opinion is commonly held by nonsmokers, others find a major caveat to the argument. Heroin and cocaine were made illegal by legislation. Tobacco remains a legal product.

"Is choosing not to sell cigarettes any different than choosing not to sell birth control?" asked Lucas Kempton '04. "To me, denying a legal product to your customer because you don't agree with it is a violation of citizens' rights."

Reuters reported that the decision might cost CVS approximately \$2 billion in revenue annually.

After the announcement, CVS shares fell 1 percent. Larger rival Walgreens saw a 3.9 percent hike in share value, and Rite Aid Corporation's stocks rose 2 percent. Both Walgreens and Rite Aid will continue selling tobacco products.

According to The Washington Post, CVS runs over 750 MinuteClinics and is willing to incur the short-term pain of losing shareholders in order to position itself for a long-term role in the new health care marketplace created by the Affordable Care Act.

"This move is an effort to embrace the new health care marketplace and position the corporation to provide health care to individuals," said Sharpe.

"Health care is becoming more decentralized, and consumers are getting more choices about where to get care, whether that's a retail clinic or a traditional hospital," said Vaughn Kauffman, a principal in PwC's Health Industries Advisory Services, to The Washington Post.

Although tobacco products are still legal, data shows that tobacco is an industry whose decline is reaching a point where it may no longer be feasible to sustain sales.

According to Reuters, compared to the 43 percent of Americans that smoked in 1965, only 18 percent smoke today. However, tobacco-related diseases continue to cause the highest death toll (480,000 deaths per year) amongst all preventable causes of death in the U.S.

"It's all about the money," said Ziad Najjar, owner of Royal Hookah Lounge in Quaker Village. "CVS will do whatever makes them money. Luckily for small business owners like me, it opens up some of the marketplace."

"Many people are quitting smoking and buying e-cigarettes from me for health reasons," said Najjar. "Besides, pharmacies shouldn't sell tobacco anyways. They should cure people, not make them ill."

The growing unpopularity of smoking, in addition to the opportunity to provide health care to customers, has led to the groundbreaking move by CVS.

For smokers, the fact that tobacco is legal may matter little if major corporations like CVS begin to find ways to compensate for the revenue of tobacco products. Capitalism, not legislation, may be the reason tobacco will become an obsolete product in the American marketplace.

"Smoke 'em if you got 'em," said Kempton. "You won't be able to get them for much longer."



SARA MINSKY/GUILFORDIAN

## Moral Monday has protesters flooding streets of Raleigh

BY JAKE DELAHANTY  
STAFF WRITER

History was made on Feb. 8 when an estimated 80,000-100,000 people flooded the streets of downtown Raleigh.

It was the Moral March on Raleigh.

Jordan Green, editor of the Triad City Beat, was amazed by the size and diversity of protesters in the rally.

"There were three or four city blocks just jammed with people," Green said in a phone interview. "It was a very diverse crowd. Doctors in their white coats stood alongside teachers, fast-food workers and union members."

"Black, white, Asian, Latino, young and old — everyone was there."

What sparked such a large gathering in the state's capital?

Prior to the 2012 election, Democrat and former Governor Beverly Perdue vetoed conservative legislation drafted by a largely Republican General Assembly.

Following the election, Republican Governor Pat McCrory

took office while the General Assembly became even more homogeneous. This combination enabled the state legislature to pass its conservative legislation with more ease.

The moral marchers' outcries are directed towards this legislation, which they claim calls for politically driven changes like gerrymandering.

"The new North Carolina map packs Democrats into a small number of ultrasafe seats and gives Republicans largely safe seats that will be unlosable in anything but a wave election," said David Weigel, journalist for the Slate magazine, in a recent interview with the

Washington Post.

Protesters are also rallying to protect voting rights.

Last summer's voting regulations, collectively deemed "The Monster Laws," disenfranchised many minority voters by demanding all voters to present government-issued identification at the polls.

"I'm not big on using the term 'voter suppression,' but it is hard to see this law as justified," said Professor Rick Hasen at the University of California at Irvine to The Washington Post. "The intent here is to make it harder for people — especially non-white people and those likely to vote Democratic —

to register or cast a vote that will be counted."

Another goal for the protesters, especially teachers and parents, is education reform. The National Education Association's 2013 school statistics reveal that North Carolina is ranked 48th in terms of money spent on supporting students.

Additionally, Duke University researchers found that 30 percent of public school students and 60 percent of charter school students attend a racially unbalanced school, a school with less than 20 percent or more than 80 percent minority enrollment.

Other major issues on the minds

of the marchers were income inequality, LGBTQQA rights, women's rights, health care and environment protection.

Will the Moral March have a significant impact on the General Assembly and future legislation?

Associate Professor of Political Science Maria Rosales offered her perspective.

"The event is significant in size and in the ways it can energize people," Rosales said in an email. "However, it seems unlikely (that it will) have more than minor effects on immediate policies coming out of Raleigh."

Reverend William Barber II, president of the North Carolina NAACP and leader of the movement, enthralled the crowd with his keynote speech at the rally.

"We are black, white, Latino, Native American," said Barber. "We are Democrat, Republican, independent ... we are natives and immigrants, business leaders and workers and unemployed, doctors and the uninsured, gay and straight, students and parents and retirees."

"We stand here as a quilt of many colors, faiths and creeds."

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Jordan Green, editor of the Triad City Beat