

young people are smoking regularly, they already regret having started.<sup>619</sup> A 1992 Gallup Survey confirmed this, showing that 70% of regular adolescent smokers regretted having begun to smoke and wished they could quit. If an adolescent's cigarette or smokeless tobacco use continues into adulthood, he or she may ultimately become one of the over 400,000 Americans who die from tobacco-caused diseases each year.<sup>620</sup>

Most adult smokers became regular smokers as youngsters. Among those adults who ever smoked regularly, nearly 90% began to smoke, and more than 70% became regular smokers, by age 18.<sup>621</sup> It is clear, therefore, that if smoking does not begin in childhood or adolescence, it is unlikely that it will ever begin. Thus, addiction to nicotine-containing tobacco products is, first and foremost, a pediatric disease.

FDA regulatory action should be based on a youth-centered strategy that is intended to reduce the risk that future generations of Americans will become dependent on nicotine without prohibiting access to these products by adults. The Agency recognizes the need for cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products to remain available to adults, because millions of American adults use and are addicted to these products. The potential disruption to society resulting from the elimination of tobacco products would be great, and therefore FDA does not intend to remove them from the market.

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<sup>619</sup> George A. Gallup International Institute. *Teenage Attitudes and Behavior Concerning Tobacco - Report of the Findings*. Princeton, New Jersey. 1992.

<sup>620</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Reducing The Health Consequences of Smoking: 25 Years of Progress, A Report of the Surgeon General*. 1989. Page 5.

<sup>621</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Preventing Tobacco Use Among Young People, A Report of the Surgeon General*, *supra*, at pp. 63-65.