

CVS, including 4 in TH, to stop tobacco sales

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Published: Wednesday, February 5, 2014, 5:56 pm



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TERRE HAUTE, Ind. (WTHI) – Stunning news on the national retail front – CVS, the largest pharmacy chain in the country, will no longer sell tobacco products beginning Oct. 1.

It's a move that's drawing high praise from the health care industry, and even the president. So, if you get your smokes from a local CVS, you'll have to look elsewhere come Oct. 1.

CEO, Larry Merlo, broke the news on Wednesday's CBS This Morning.

“We believe this is the right move for the company. It positions us for future growth and have the opportunity to play a bigger role in our evolving health care system,” Merlo stated Wednesday morning.

This is no small decision by the nation's largest pharmacy chain.

Annually, CVS makes \$2 billion off tobacco sales. But Merlo says CVS is putting people ahead of profits.

“It’s a real contradiction to talk about all the things we’re doing to help people on their path to better health, and at the same time sell tobacco products,” said Merlo.

There are numbers backing up this decision by CVS – smoking is down by 24 percent since 1965.

A local doctor told News 10 the CVS decision will help further a positive cultural change in America.

“This is a major impact. Now, you will start seeing other major drug stores and just grocery stores,” said Dr. Kayur Patel, Vigo Medical Center.

CVS isn’t stopping with just simply pulling tobacco products from their shelves. The company has plans of launching a national anti-smoking campaign in the spring.

CVS has 7,600 stores nationwide, including four in Terre Haute.

“They’re setting precedence for other stores, other companies, to see that you can put people ahead of profits, and you can be forward-thinking and not lose a lot of business,” said Carrie Bennet, Union Hospital. “I think they’re going to find this is a good move, it’s a solid move, and people respect what they’re doing.”

We’ll have to wait and see if other retailers will follow this bold lead taken by CVS.