

Knock Tobacco Out of the Park – Quality of Life Committee Hearing, September 26, 2:00 p.m.

- The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK) and The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center are partnering with other stakeholders to raise awareness about a nationwide effort to make professional baseball facilities tobacco free - Knock Tobacco Out of the Park, a significant youth tobacco prevention initiative.
- There is growing national momentum for this issue following the death of former San Diego Padre great Tony Gwyn, who died at age 54 from cancer related to smokeless tobacco use and public awareness raised by pitcher Curt Schilling whose cancer was also related to smokeless tobacco use.
- Half of Major League Baseball stadiums (15 of 30) are now completely tobacco-free as a result of state and local laws. MLB cities covered by such laws include Anaheim, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, New York, Oakland, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, St. Louis, Tampa Bay (St. Petersburg), and Washington, D.C.
- **The Houston City Council Quality of Life Committee will consider a draft Houston ordinance on Wednesday, September 26, at 2:00 p.m.**
- A municipal ordinance in Houston, the fourth largest city in the country, would provide huge momentum to the effort, get tobacco out of baseball, protect our youth and send a strong message across the nation – that kids and tobacco don't mix.
- Over the last two years, CTFK and MD Anderson met with Houston council members, Mayor Sylvester Turner and his staff. The feedback has been very positive and supportive.
- **Supporters of the policy:**
 - **Harris County Medical Society**
 - **Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce**
 - **Major League Baseball**
 - **Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids**
 - **Houston Methodist**
 - **Memorial Hermann**
 - **Texas Childrens' Hospital**
 - **American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network**
 - **Chairman of the Board of the Harris County – Houston Sports Authority**
 - **UT MD Anderson Cancer Center (resource)**
- Compared to comprehensive policies adopted in other cities, the proposed Houston ordinance is a narrow approach considering feedback from city hall – limited to the players and employees of the team throughout the stadium. The ordinance would not apply to the public, or stands, and the unique approach in Houston has drawn universal appeal. The scientific evidence strongly supports focus on the players – the role models and heroes for children.

Key statistic: CDC reports that high school athletes use smokeless tobacco at nearly twice the rate of non-athletes, and smokeless tobacco use among athletes increased more than 11 percent from 2001 to 2013, even as smoking rates dropped significantly. Among male high school athletes, smokeless tobacco use was particularly alarming at 17.4 percent in 2013.