

Clackamas County Health Advisory: Protecting Teens from E-Cigarettes & Flavored Nicotine

August, 16, 2022 — Flavored nicotine use among youth is an epidemic across the country, state and in our local community. While teen use of conventional cigarettes has fallen dramatically over decades, use of e-cigarettes has skyrocketed to nearly 30% among teens.

The Portland metro region is experiencing the same epidemic of flavored nicotine use. In Clackamas County, the problem is even more pronounced, prompting Clackamas Public Health to issue a Health Advisory to youth and parents. Fortunately, there are proven strategies and community support for solutions that protect youth from the harms of tobacco and vaping products. Together, we can keep our kids safe.

Vaping is NOT Harmless

- Appealing flavors, such as cotton candy, are added to e-cigarettes and other nicotine delivery devices to attract youth, soften the harsh taste, and entice new users.
- Nicotine contained in these products is highly addictive and can cause serious harm in young people, impacting learning, memory, and attention.
- Massive inequities for nicotine product use exist, most impacting youth of color, LGBTQ youth and low-income households.
- One JUUL pod can contain as much nicotine as a pack of cigarettes, and evidence shows youth e-cigarette use leads to future use of conventional tobacco products.

Reducing Access: Proven Strategies

Implement bans on the sale of flavored products

- There are over 300 jurisdictions across the U.S that have imposed flavor bans, which have shown to significantly decrease youth nicotine use.
- Washington County residents overwhelmingly voted (77%) in May 2022 to approve a local flavor ban, showing strong public support for the policy and an opportunity for other counties or the state to follow suit.

Remove nicotine from school zones

- Studies consistently show that youth are more likely to smoke when they live or go to school in neighborhoods with a high density of tobacco retailers.
- In Clackamas County, over half of public schools have a tobacco retailer within a ten-minute walk from campus.

Price promotion regulation

- The price of tobacco products has a direct and significant effect on usage.
- Youth are more sensitive to tobacco price increases than adults. For every 10% cigarettes price increase, youth use is reduced by 5%.
- Washington County's recent flavor ban prohibits the use of coupons or price promotions for any tobacco or nicotine product.

Call to Action: Protecting Our Youth

Parents, Prevention Partners and Advocacy Groups

- Join Flavors Hook Oregon Kids, a statewide movement to protect children from tobacco and nicotine use.
- Talk with your local corner store about limiting advertising and/or sale of nicotine products.
- Contact your elected officials or tell your personal story on social media or with reporters to share why prohibiting flavored tobacco is so important to keep youth safe.
- Support youth in quitting by promoting the tri-county Don't Lean on Nicotine Campaign. Text QUIT to 88709 or visit <https://www.clackamas.us/publichealth/dont-lean-on-nicotine>.

Schools

- Advocate for zoning restrictions to limit tobacco retail density near schools. Start by educating decision makers of the problem of youth access to tobacco and nicotine products in neighborhoods.
- Participate in Student Health Survey to monitor trends in tobacco and nicotine use, inform decisions and actions, and to prioritize resources.
- Support students in quitting by promoting the Tri-County Don't Lean on Nicotine Campaign (Text QUIT to 88709).

Decision Makers and Elected Officials

- Pass policies that reduce access of flavored products to youth, including flavor bans, zoning restrictions, and prohibiting price promotions for tobacco products.

Best regards,



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Sarah Present

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