



NJSOPHE - New Jersey Society for Public Health Education

NJSOPHE is committed to promoting healthy behaviors, healthy communities, and healthy environments through our focus on prevention and public health education.

Protecting NJ Youth from E-Cigarettes: A Public Health Approach

E-cigarettes, also known as vapes, are battery-operated devices that people, particularly youth, use to **inhale nicotine, aerosol, flavorings and other chemicals** (drugabuse.gov). There are currently more than 460 different e-cigarette brands on the market, but one brand, **JUUL, holds nearly 75% of the market share** (drugabuse.gov). E-cigarette devices are small and look like pens or USB drives, making them easy to overlook by parents or school staff.

The Health Impact

- Many people assume e-cigarettes are “safe” or “just water vapor”. However, these devices produce an aerosol that **contains widely varying levels of nicotine and many other chemicals**, making it hard for users to know what they are inhaling.
- In addition to the known health concerns regarding nicotine, the **chemicals in e-cigarettes have been shown to cause inflammation and lung damage**.
- As of October 2019, there have been **800 cases of serious illness, and 13 deaths from e-cigarettes in the US** (CDC).



E-cigarettes in NJ*

	As of Oct 2019, there are 32 investigations of serious lung disease , 13 confirmed cases , and 1 death from e-cigarette use		NJ is ranked 34th for tobacco prevention state funding and is 1 of 19 states that spends less than the CDC recommendation.
	NJ pays over \$4 billion in annual health care costs directly caused by smoking		NJ spends \$7.2 M on smoking prevention while tobacco companies spend \$179.4 M on NJ marketing

*Tobaccofreekids.org; CDC

Targeting Youth

Even though it’s illegal under the age of 21, youth e-cigarette use is increasing at an alarming rate. **In 2018, 1 in 5 high school students and 1 in 20 middle school students regularly used e-cigarettes**, a 78% and 48% respective increase from 2017 (FDA). Manufacturers **target youth by offering kid-friendly flavors**, such as cotton candy and gummi bear, and package e-liquids to look like fun food items. Also, there are few restrictions on e-cigarette marketing. They are **widely promoted on social media**, using tactics known to appeal to youth. Over **75% of these posts are suspected to be from automated accounts (bots)** posing as real people to encourage use and spread misinformation (publicgoodsproject.org).

What can Legislators, Public Health Workers, and NJ Residents do?

Advocate for Access Changes - Prevent youth access to e-cigarettes

- **Prohibit e-cigarette self-service displays at retail locations** (must be behind counter)
- **Change online purchasing to prohibit youth access** and ensure proof of age at both purchase and delivery
- **Increase tax on e-cigarettes** (research shows that pricing can prevent youth from starting)
- **Enact statewide retail licensing to help enforce age-of-sale restriction**
 - 2/3 of high school students are not asked for ID when purchasing (Manderski 2015)
 - 16 states require a retail license to sell e-cigarettes, including PA and MD (Tobacco Control Legal Consortium 2018)
 - License fees can pay for inspections, retail staff training, and e-cigarette education; additionally, the fee discourages some stores from selling at all
- **Fund statewide age-of-sale training and enforcement.** Penalties can also be increased for selling to underage youth

Advocate for Marketing Changes - Curb marketing of e-cigarettes aimed at youth

- **Ban/limit flavored e-cigarettes** to reduce youth appeal
 - 82% of youth who use e-cigarettes cited flavors as a reason why they vape (Ambrose 2015)
- **Strengthen and enforce marketing regulations**, especially those aimed at youth
 - 78% of youth were exposed to e-cigarette ads in 2016. Exposure to ads increases risk of youth using them (Marynak 2016)

Advocate for Funding for Prevention Education, and Research on Health Impact and Prevention Strategies

- **Support funding for more prevention campaigns**, such as the FDA “The Real Cost Campaign” that seeks to educate at-risk teens about the harmful effects of smoking
- **Research long-term usage dangers, and practices** that can help current users quit
- **Advocate for stronger penalties in schools** for students caught with e-cigarettes

How can NJSOPHE help?

Policy	Data Collection	Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify evidence-based prevention programs and policies that fit the needs of each community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collect data, evidence, and stories to guide communities from awareness to action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop educational materials for legislators, organizations, and community members

About NJSOPHE

~170 health educators who work across the state in:

- Local and State government
- Community and non-profit agencies
- Health care facilities
- Businesses
- Universities
- Schools

Est. 1984

Providing support to health education professionals for over three decades

Contact Us

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