



## STATE OF WASHINGTON

April 30, 2019

Dear Washington State School Administrator:

As you are most likely aware, legislation raising the minimum age of sale for tobacco and vapor products to 21 was recently enacted by the Washington State Legislature, effective January 1, 2020. The law will help us keep youth safe from nicotine addiction and the health consequences of using tobacco and vapor products. However, vapor product use among Washington's youth is a growing public health problem. We are pleased to provide resources that may help you find solutions for your school(s).

### **The Problem**

Youth use of vapor products (also called e-cigarettes, vapes, JUULs, etc.) in Washington State increased significantly from 2016 to 2018. According to the 2018 Healthy Youth Survey:

- Vapor product use increased from 13 percent to 21 percent among 10th graders, and from 20 percent to 30 percent among 12th graders.
- Four times as many 10th graders reported vaping (21 percent) as smoking cigarettes (5 percent).
- Only about one-third of all 10th graders surveyed thought vaping is harmful.

These statistics indicate a significant backslide on decades of progress to reduce youth nicotine use. Nearly 90 percent of adults who smoke report they began before the age of 18.

Vapor products are now the most commonly-used nicotine product by youth in Washington, and manufacturers continue to modernize electronic nicotine delivery systems. The most popular vapor product is made by JUUL Labs, Inc. These products, which look like USB flash drives, are easily hidden and emit aerosol with limited odor that dissipates quickly. Disposable JUUL pods, often flavored like candy or fruit, all contain nicotine, sometimes more than the amount in an entire pack of cigarettes.

### **What You Can Do**

The best way to protect young people from the harms of vapor products is to prevent use altogether. The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA), and Surgeon General recommend that schools:

- Review and strengthen school policies related to vapor products, JUUL devices, vaping, and tobacco- and vape-free spaces.
- Inform school staff and parents about vapor products, the health risks of vaping, and encourage setting a positive example by not using tobacco products themselves.
- Promote health messaging on school campuses and provide access to resources for those who wish to quit.
- Collaborate with local prevention coalitions and healthcare providers.
- Reject tobacco industry-sponsored prevention programs, which have been proven ineffective.

Washington State School Administrator

April 30, 2019

Page 2

To help implement these recommendations at the school(s) you serve, the Washington State Department of Health Tobacco and Vapor Product Prevention and Control Program and its partners assembled a Vapor Products Toolkit for staff and parents. The toolkit includes:

- The enclosed “Vapor Products on Campus” poster. Please display this in areas primarily visited by school staff, such as break rooms, administrative offices, and boardrooms.
- A new resource website ([www.youthnow.me/vaping](http://www.youthnow.me/vaping)) with additional tools, including:
  - Facts and news about vapor products and vaping.
  - Printable posters and infographics.
  - For administrators – information about new Washington State discipline rules and alternative measures for addressing tobacco and vapor product use in schools.
  - For educators – free lesson plans and links to videos with information about vapor products and vaping.
  - For parents – information about the risks of vaping and tips for how to talk to their kids.

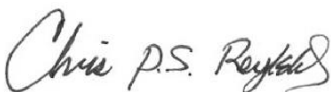
Additionally, youth and young adults in Washington State can access these cessation programs for free:

- Telephone counseling – Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW to quit tobacco and/or vapor products.
- Text message-based support for quitting vapor products – Text “QUIT” to 202-804-9884, courtesy of Truth Initiative®.
- Text message-based support for quitting tobacco products – Text “TEEN” to 47848 to access SmokefreeTeen.

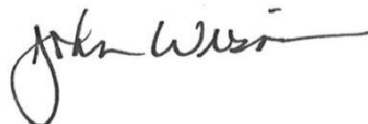
We hope these resources are helpful, and empower staff, parents, and influencers of youth to be informed partners for tobacco and vapor product prevention. School staff are also encouraged to review Healthy Youth Survey data ([www.askhys.net](http://www.askhys.net)) to understand trends in their school districts and counties.

Thank you for your efforts related to this important issue. If you have questions or feedback about these materials, please contact Matthew Cox, Community Prevention Project Specialist at ESD 112, [MattCox@esd112.org](mailto:MattCox@esd112.org).

Sincerely,



Chris Reykdal  
Superintendent of Public Instruction



John Wiesman, DrPH, MPH  
Secretary of Health