



# NJ SOPHE - New Jersey Society for Public Health Education

NJ SOPHE 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

- People may assume e-cigarettes are “safe” or “just water vapor”. Yet, 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 November 2019, there have been **2,051 cases of serious illness, and 39 deaths in the US**, mainly from illicit, or black-market, vaping materials, most of which contain THC (CDC).



### E-cigarettes in NJ\*

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

\*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 (publicgoodspj.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 strategies** that can help current users quit
- **Advocate for stronger penalties in schools** for students caught with e-cigarettes

## How can NJ SOPHE help?

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

### About NJ SOPHE

#### ~170 health educators who work across the state in:

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

Est. 1984

Providing support to health education professionals for over three decades

Contact Us

[www.njsophe.org](http://www.njsophe.org)

[info@njsophe.org](mailto:info@njsophe.org)