



# Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

November 4, 2019

Dear School Administrators,

The use of e-cigarettes by youth has skyrocketed to epidemic proportions both in Wisconsin and nationally. Twenty percent of Wisconsin high school students report currently using e-cigarettes, up from around 8% in the 2014 Youth Tobacco Survey. Youth are attracted to these products' flavors – 89% of Wisconsin high school students say they wouldn't try an unflavored tobacco product.

One product increasingly popular with teens is an e-cigarette that resembles a flash drive. They are easy to conceal and contain as much nicotine as an entire pack of cigarettes. They emit limited odor, and their aerosol quickly dissipates. These features make the products easier for kids to use in school.

Nearly all e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is particularly harmful to adolescent brains because they are still developing, and nicotine affects the parts of the brain that control learning, memory, and attention. E-cigarette use by young people also increases the likelihood of conventional cigarette use and addiction to other substances.

Wisconsin is also one of several states in recent months to see a rash of vaping-related lung disease cases, with most of the cases involving youth and young adults. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services is investigating the issue, but it's all the more reason to take teen e-cigarette use seriously.

Below are actions schools and school districts can take to proactively address this issue:

- Due to recent cases of vaping-related lung disease, if a student has unexplained breathing issues, we urge you to talk to their parents about this issue and encourage them to see a doctor.
- Visit [tobaccoischanging.com](http://tobaccoischanging.com) for more information about new tobacco products and their risks. Share these resources with parents and school staff. The site also includes contact information for local tobacco prevention and control coalitions who can provide support for educational presentations.
- Review and strengthen current tobacco-free school policies to comprehensively address e-cigarettes, their components and other emerging products. See the accompanying list of resources.
- Update curriculum to be inclusive of e-cigarettes and other tobacco products. Examples are included in the accompanying resource list.

Thank you for your help in keeping Wisconsin's young people tobacco-free. Together we can help reverse this trend of youth addiction.

Sincerely,

  
Governor Tony Evers

  
Andrea Palm

  
Carolyn Stanford Taylor



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## Comprehensive Approach to E-Cigarette Epidemic

### Use relevant, youth friendly lesson plans that address the harms of nicotine and e-cigarette use.

- [E-Cigarettes and Vape Pens Tobacco Prevention Toolkit](#) (Stanford Medicine) - *for grades 9-12*
- [E-Cigarette & JUUL Prevention Program](#) (CATCH – Coordinated Approach to Child Health) – *for grades 5-12*
- [The Real Cost of Vaping: Understanding the Dangers of Teen E-Cigarette Use](#) (Scholastic and the FDA) – *for grades 9-12*
- [Know the Risks: A Youth Guide to E-cigarettes](#) (CDC’s Office on Smoking and Health) – *for youth ages 11 – 18.*

### Review and strengthen current tobacco-free school policy.

- [Comprehensive Tobacco-Free School Policy Checklist](#) (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction)
- [Sample Comprehensive Tobacco-Free School Policy](#) (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction)
- [INDEPTH Intervention for Nicotine Dependence: Education, Prevention, Tobacco and Health](#) (American Lung Association)

### Help addicted youth quit.

- [This Is Quitting](#) (Truth Initiative and Mayo Clinic)
- [Wisconsin Tobacco Quitline](#) (Wisconsin Department of Health Services)
- [Not On Tobacco \(N-O-T\)](#) (American Lung Association)

### Provide resources to parents about talking to their teens.

- [Tobacco Is Changing](#) (Wisconsin Department of Health)
- [E-Cigarettes and Youth: What Parents Need to Know](#) (CDC)
- [E-Cigarettes, “Vapes”, and JUULs: What Parents Should Know](#) (American Lung Association)

### Engage youth to promote health messaging throughout school.

- [Real Cost](#) – Multimedia campaign by FDA’s Center for Tobacco Products
- [Taking Down Tobacco](#) (Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids)
- [www.thetruth.com](#) (Truth Initiative)
- [Free posters](#) (CTP’s Exchange Lab)