
Restorative Solutions: Rethinking Consequences for Youth Tobacco Use

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Agenda

- Introductions
- Goals & Objectives
- Project Background
- Vaping Landscape
- Impact on Youth
- Restorative Solutions
- Resources
- Discussion & Q&A

Participant Introductions

- Name
- Organization
- What are you hoping to get out of this session?

Goals and Objectives of Workshop

- Examine causes of youth vaping and tobacco product use through a public health and community lens.
- Challenge punitive approaches by exploring the effectiveness of restorative justice models for addressing youth tobacco use.
- Foster collaborative dialogue among participants to share practices, insights, and solutions for community-driven and court-level changes.



Purpose: Address tobacco and nicotine use prevention in minority communities across Pennsylvania by creating and developing new initiatives to advocate for tobacco and vape-free communities.

- This project is funded by: The American Lung Association (ALA) since 2023.
- In 2023-2024 the name of this project was PA Tobacco Free Minority Ambassadors Statewide Taskforce.



Sectors:

- Public health
- Healthcare
- Behavioral health
- Social services
- Academia
- Community leaders
- Those identifying as changemakers.

Member Organizations:

- American Lung Association
- Harrisburg University
- The City of Philadelphia Resource Hub
- Harrisburg Area YMCA
- UPMC
- Bradbury Sullivan LGBTQ+ Center
- American Heart Association
- Adagio Health
- Wellspan Health
- Lehigh University
- PA Cancer Coalition
- Delaware County Tobacco and Vape-Free Coalition



Current Initiatives:

- Educating Parents and Caregivers
- Understanding Youth Decision-Making Around Vaping
- Restorative Justice (non-punitive responses to youth vaping)

Initiative 1: Educate Parents and Caregivers

- Developed a one-pager with practical tips for parents on discussing tobacco and nicotine use.
- Hosted & attended table events across communities to distribute the one-pager and provide direct education.
- Created the Little Justice Leaders video to further engage parents and caregivers, offering additional resources on youth decision-making around vaping.



Collaboration with Little Justice Leaders



Initiative 2:

Understanding Youth Decision-Making Around Vaping

- Understand why youth vape
 - What messages and themes can drive them stop or reconsider starting?
- Develop, Pilot, and Deploy Anti-Vaping Media Campaign
 - **Environmental & Human Rights Impacts of Vaping**
 - **Youth Focus Groups/Message Testing and Parents Education**

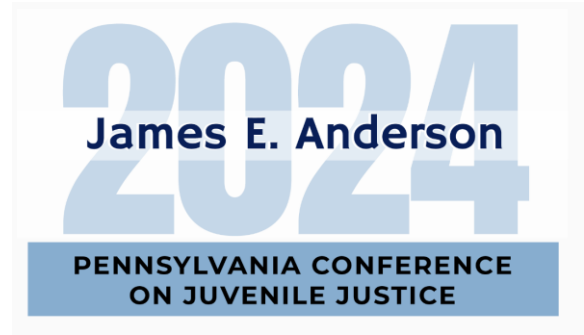


Initiative 3: Restorative Justice

Identified the need for a standardized & empathetic approach in Pennsylvania schools for handling cases of students caught with vapes, emphasizing the importance of viewing vaping as a potential addiction rather than just a disciplinary issue.

Attempted to connect with district magisterial courts and juvenile justice court commissions

Brings us to the James E. Anderson Conference on Juvenile Justice today!



Vaping Overview

What is Vaping?

- Formerly “electronic cigarettes”
- Liquid heated by a coil and battery
- Produces aerosol (vape cloud)
- High-levels of Nicotine
 - 1 “pod” = 20-30 cigarettes (pack)
 - Thousands of “hits”
 - Nicotine salts (faster absorption)
 - Easily hidden
- Disposable and Non-Disposal
- Unregulated (sales, nicotine levels?)
- Available in social, physical and online retail settings



Not just nicotine

Other substances are commonly vaped:

- Synthetic or Tobacco-free Nicotine
- Marijuana/THC oil and other products (ie waxy (psychoactive effects))
- CBD oil (cannabis compound that does not cause psychoactive effects)
- Other “supplements” (e.g. melatonin)
- Flavors (safe for digestion, but what about inhalation?)



Plastic Case



Lithium Battery



Wick



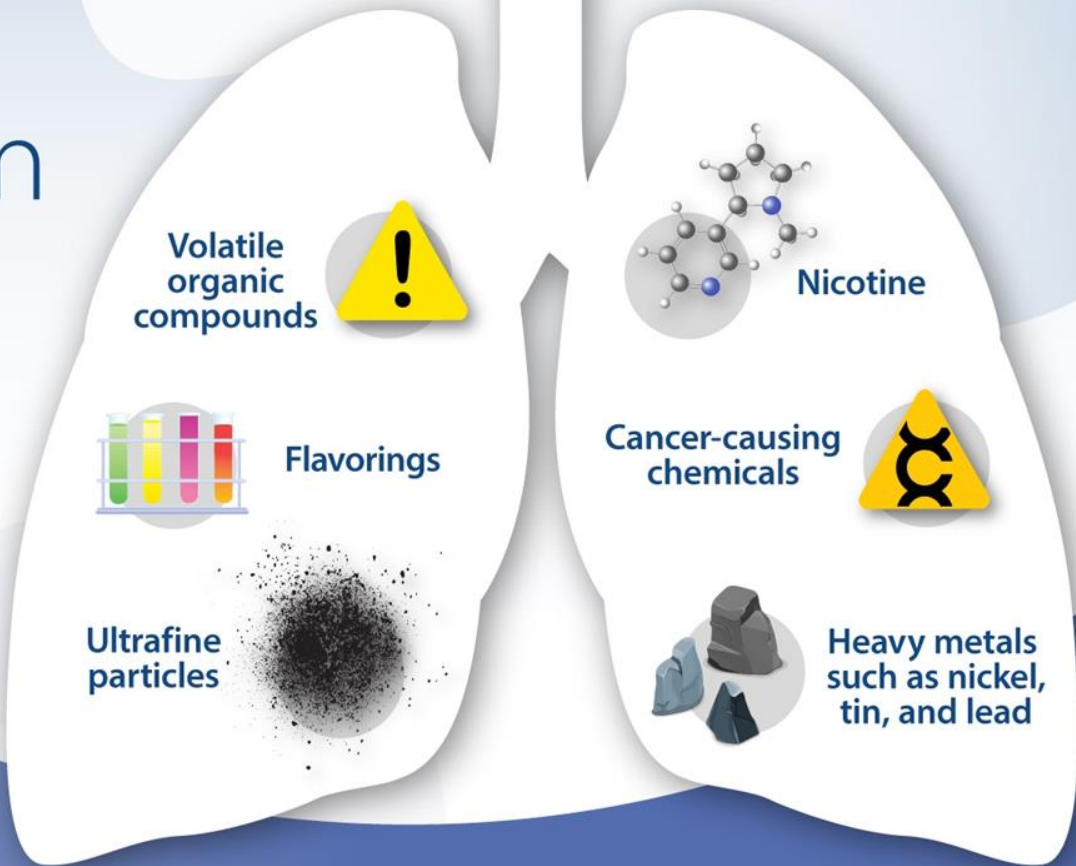
Sponge/E-Juice



IT'S NOT JUST
WATER VAPOR



Substances in e-cigarette aerosol



Source: U.S. Surgeon General Report, 2016

[CDC.gov/Vaping](https://www.cdc.gov/Vaping)

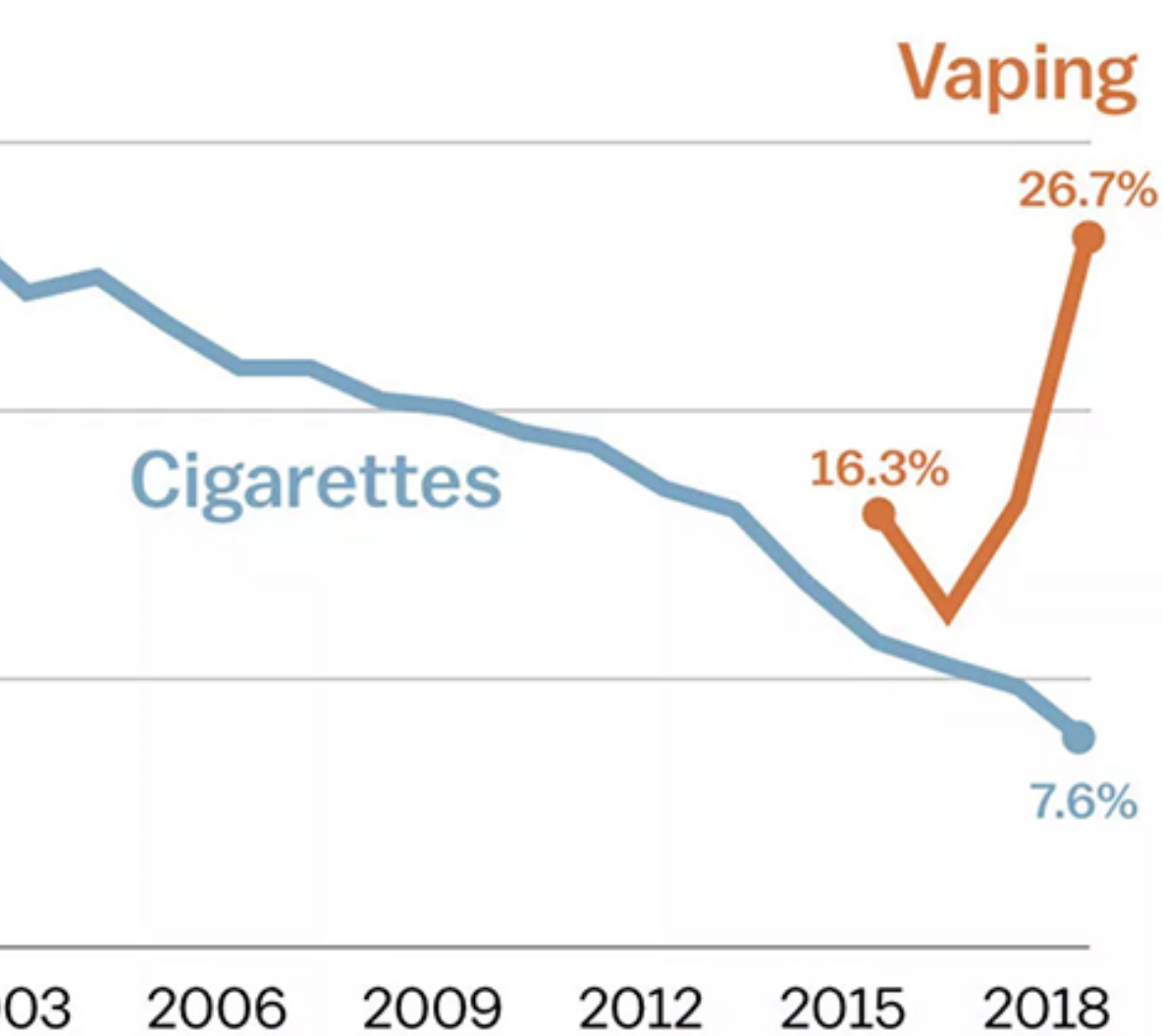


JUUL

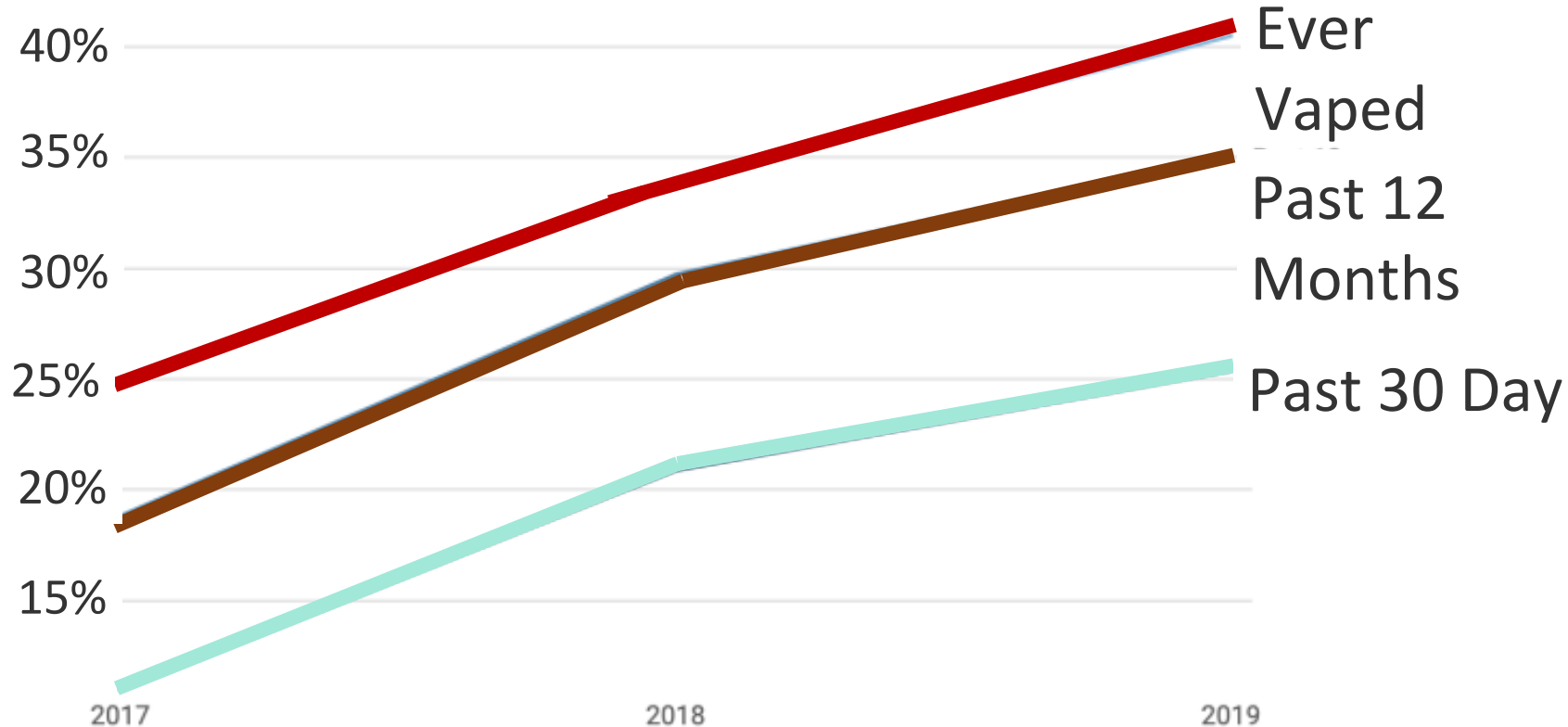
VAPORIZED

#SMOKINGEVOLVED





Nicotine Vaping Prevalence Among 12th-Graders



Source: NIDA Monitoring the Future Survey • [Get the data](#)

Vaping Rates

- **Prevalence:** In 2023, the CDC's National Youth Tobacco Survey reported that 14% of high school students and 3% of middle school students had used e-cigarettes in the past 30 days. This consistent usage underscores the popularity of vaping among teens CDC, 2023 National Youth Tobacco Survey.
- **Frequency of Use:** About one-quarter of high school e-cigarette users report daily use, indicating frequent exposure to nicotine and likely dependence CDC, 2023 National Youth Tobacco Survey.
- **Perceptions of Addiction:** A Truth Initiative survey showed that more than half of youth who vape believe they can quit anytime, though many experience cravings shortly after stopping (Truth Initiative, 2023.)

Impacts of Vaping

Vaping Addiction: A Healthcare Issue

- Vaping sends high doses of nicotine (a highly addictive chemical) to the brain in 10 seconds.
- Nicotine Addiction: a chronic, relapsing disorder characterized by compulsive nicotine seeking and use despite adverse consequences. Involves functional changes to brain circuits involved in **reward, stress, and self-control** (*Drug Misuse and Addiction, 2024*)



Neurological Susceptibility: Nicotine

- **Nicotine + Flavors + Devices**
- Early nicotine addiction can harm brain development and brain cell functioning.
- **Adolescent brains exposed to nicotine are more susceptible to other addictive behaviors.**



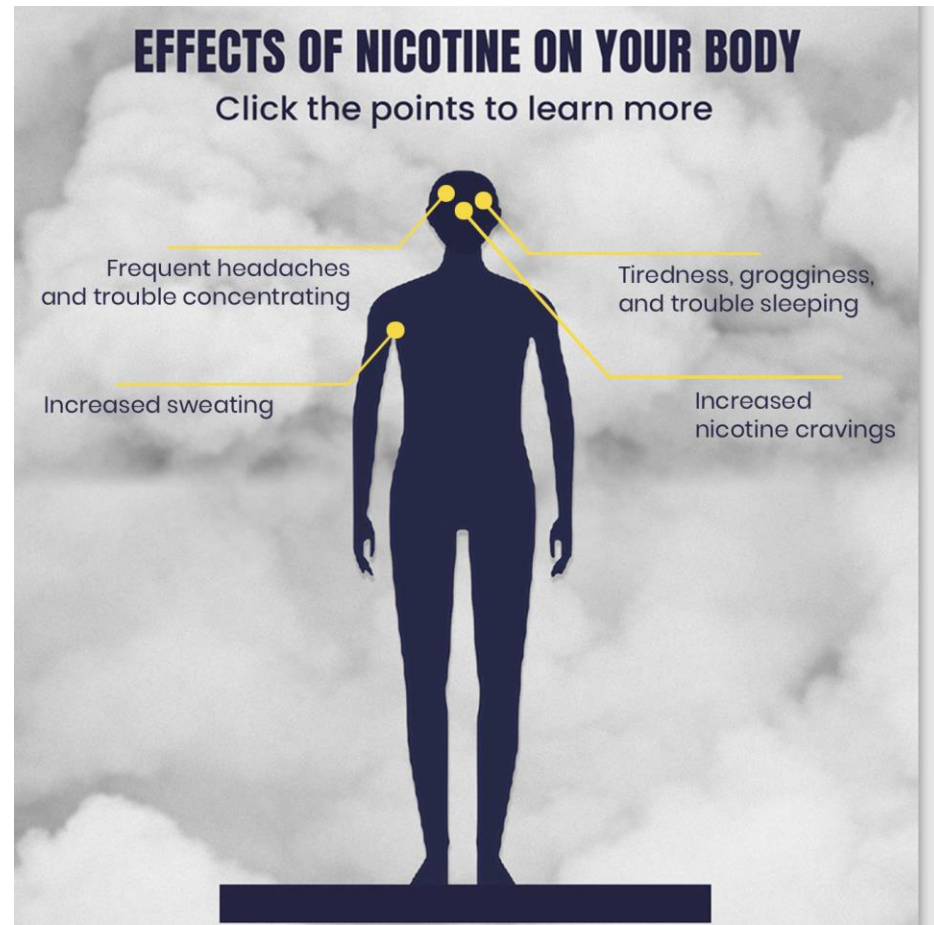
Nicotine and Brain Development

The U.S. Surgeon General has warned that nicotine exposure during adolescence affects:

- Attention
- Learning
- Impulse control
- Sleep ([U.S. Surgeon General's Report on E-cigarettes.](#))

Vaping Addiction: A Healthcare Issue

- Acute lung injury (fluid, inflammation)
- Reduced lung function, difficulty breathing
- Coughing
- Asthma
- Cardiovascular inflammation
- Immunological suppression
- Feeling irritable, jumpy, restless, or anxious
- Feeling sad or down
- Disrupted sleeping
- Difficulty concentrating



Impacts on Schools and Students

- **Academic Effects:** Studies link nicotine addiction to decreased academic performance, as withdrawal symptoms can distract students, and use of e-cigarettes can lead to increased absenteeism (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018.)
- **School Disruptions:** Reports from the CDC indicate that vaping incidents are common in schools, often occurring in restrooms, hallways, and even classrooms, disrupting learning environments CDC, 2023 National Youth Tobacco Survey.
- **Disciplinary Alternatives:** Schools are increasingly turning to restorative justice models to address vaping as a health issue, rather than using punitive measures, and report a decrease in repeat offenses as a result (RAND Corporation Study on Restorative Practices in Schools.)
- **Educational Sessions:** Restorative approaches often include educational sessions on addiction and its effects, with schools finding these methods more effective in promoting behavioral change (RAND Corporation)

Health effects of vaping during pregnancy

- Nicotine is a health danger for pregnant people and is toxic to developing fetuses
- Nicotine can damage a fetus's developing brain and lungs.
- E-cigarette use during pregnancy has been associated with low birth weight and preterm birth.



Public Health Implications

- Safer than smoking? - **Probably**
- Help people quit? – **Maybe**
- Harmful to youth? – **Definitely**
 - **Physical Health**
 - **Behavioral Health**
 - **addiction and future addictions**
 - **Academics**
 - **Parental relationship**
 - **Criminal justice involvement?**



Environmental and Safety Implications

- **Environmental harms**
 - **150 million throw away each year in the U.S. alone**
- **Human rights**
 - **Heavy metal mining, labor abuses**
- **Hazardous waste**
- **No way to recycle them (at least the U.S.)**



Evidence that suspension from school does not work

Limitations of Suspensions

- **Research Findings:** The American Psychological Association (APA) reports that suspensions fail to address root causes such as addiction, often leading to:
 - Increased behavioral problems.
 - Alienation from school community.
- **Specific Findings:** APA's studies indicate that suspended students are more likely to disengage, experience decreased academic performance, and face higher dropout rates.

Restorative Justice Impact

- **National Education Association (NEA) Research Findings:** Schools implementing restorative practices report:
 - **Reduction in Recidivism:** Fewer repeat offenses.
 - **Examples of Improvements in Positive School Climates:**
 - Increased student engagement.
 - Improved relationships between students and staff.
 - Decreased rates of suspension and expulsion.

Evidence that suspension from school does not work

Community-Based Programs

- **YMCA Program Success:** Programs such as the YMCA's counseling and addiction education initiatives show:
 - Higher rates of sustained quitting among students.
 - Students report feeling supported rather than stigmatized, which fosters healthier coping strategies and reduces reliance on nicotine.

Criminal Justice Involvement

- Student Assistance Programs
- School Boards, School District Policy - Decide when and how to elevate from school to criminal justice system
- Parental Involvement
 - Parents often paying fines
- Magisterial District Courts
- Juvenile Courts
- Court by Court/Judge by Judge variation/lack of uniformity (?)
 - Fines
 - Disciplinary action

Criminal Justice Involvement

- Are the existing (and variable) responses at school or court-level actually addressing the vaping problem?
- Increasing uniformity in response? How?
 - Needed across schools
 - Needed across courts
- Anecdotally, students don't want to see their peers punished.
 - They want to see them get help/support.
 - See resources above

Criminal Justice Involvement - Sale Compliance

- Court involvement in illegal/underage sales? - (21 years old)
 - Retail enforcement
 - “Undercover buys”
 - Tobacco retailer licenses are rarely revoked
 - Need to fail 3 enforcement checks within two year period
 - But checks are only conducted once per year

Case Study: Harrisburg Area YMCA

Case Study: YMCA's Non-Punitive Response History

Supporting Youth Caught Vaping

Early Experiences

- Schools & District Courts initially responded with suspensions, fines, or both.

Shift in Perspective

- Education for school district officials and district judges on addiction and tobacco targeting youth led to
 - Positive attitude changes.
 - Shift towards health-focused solutions over punitive actions.

Progress in Referrals

- Schools and courts began referring youth to YMCA Tobacco Prevention & Cessation Programs:
 - **Programs:** INDEPTH by American Lung Association & N.O.T. Youth Cessation.

Case Study: YMCA's Non-Punitive Response History

2023-2024 School Year Impact

- **51 Youth Referred** from 8 school districts, 15 schools (Dauphin, Cumberland, Perry Counties).
 - **23 Youth Quit** after 4 sessions.
 - **34 Youth** reported continued efforts to quit and build healthier habits.

Outcomes

- Schools and some courts began waiving fines & penalties for youth completing programs with positive reports from YMCA staff.

Call to Action

- **Expand Education & Advocacy:** Promote health-centered responses across all PA school districts and district courts.

Treatment Resources

PA Department of Health - mylifemyquit.org Resources/ Treatment for Youth



MY QUIT

VAPING

TOBACCO & NICOTINE

RESOURCES

LOG IN

Hello. [Sign In](#) or [Enroll today](#).

[NOT IN PENNSYLVANIA? GENERAL SITE.](#)



FREE.
CONFIDENTIAL.
CUSTOMIZABLE.

START MY QUIT

Live Chat

Resources/ Treatment for Youth

- **Truth Initiative and Mayo Clinic**
 - **“EX Program”**
 - **A Vaping Cessation Text Message Program for Adolescent E-Cigarette Users**
- Text **DITCHVAPE** to **88709** to receive free quit vaping support.



Resources/ Treatment for Youth and Adults

- Ask your doctor!
 - Primary Care Providers
 - Pediatricians
 - Can prescribe nicotine replacement
 - Create a quit plan

Resources/ Treatment for Adults/Parents/Caregivers

- Adult Telephonic-Free Coaching and Nicotine Patches
 - **1 800 QUIT NOW**
 - Spanish: 1-855-DÉJELO-YA
 - Referrals to in-person and virtual programs
 - Specific to mental health and behavioral health conditions, menthol use, pregnancy

Resources/ Youth Prevention

TRU - Tobacco Resistance Unit



Movement throughout all Pennsylvania to encourage youth ages 12 to 18 to stay tobacco free by giving them education and resources.

CATCH My Breath



Evidence-Based Vaping Prevention Program for 5th - 12th graders empowering students to be vape free by providing them with knowledge and skills to make informed decisions.

Enforcement Resources

Tobacco Merchant Education Initiative

It is this initiative's goal to educate, both tobacco merchants and the general public, on the tobacco sales laws. We aim to reduce the sale of tobacco products to people under 21 and prevent their exposure to nicotine.

Printable materials can be downloaded at the bottom of this page.

FDA related information:

[FDA – Tobacco Products](#)

[FDA – Rules, Regulations, and Guidance](#)

[FDA – Compliance and Enforcement](#)

[FDA – Tobacco Science and Research](#)

[FDA – Public Health and Education](#)

[FDA Tobacco Enforcement](#)

[FDA – Tobacco Product Guidance](#)

PA Act 112 related information:

[PA Dept. of Health / Div. of Tobacco Prevention & Control](#)

[PA Dept. of Health / Tobacco Sales & Sales to Underage Purchasers](#)

[PA Dept. of Revenue – Tobacco Tax and Licenses](#)

Other/Partner Organizations:

[Pennsylvania Department of Health](#)

[Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General](#)

[Pennsylvania Alliance to Control Tobacco](#)



Merchant Education

<https://pa-tobaccomerchanted.org/>

Enforcement - Act 112 (for your reference)

Administrative action.-

- (1) Upon receiving notice, in accordance with subsection (c) or otherwise, of a third conviction of a retailer during any 24-month period, the department may, after an opportunity for a hearing, suspend the retailer's cigarette license for up to 30 days. The department, in a hearing held pursuant to this paragraph, has jurisdiction only to determine whether or not the retailer was convicted of a violation of subsection (a). The introduction of a certified copy of a conviction for a violation of subsection (a) shall be sufficient evidence for the suspension of the cigarette license.
- (2) Upon receiving notice, in accordance with subsection (c) or otherwise, of a fourth conviction of a retailer during any 24-month period, the department may, after an opportunity for a hearing, revoke the retailer's cigarette license for up to 60 days. The department, in a hearing held under this paragraph, has jurisdiction only to determine whether or not the retailer was convicted of a violation of subsection (a). The introduction of a certified copy of a conviction for a violation of subsection (a) shall be sufficient evidence for the revocation of the cigarette license.

Enforcement - Act 112

(i) Enforcement.—An employee of the Department of Health, a single county authority created pursuant to the Pennsylvania Drug and Alcohol Abuse Control Act, a county or municipal health department or a primary contractor pursuant to Chapter 7 of the Tobacco Settlement Act may institute a proceeding to enforce the provisions of this section in accordance with any means authorized by the Rules of Criminal Procedure. The enforcement authority granted pursuant to this subsection may not be delegated.

(j) Other penalties.—Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, prosecution or conviction under this section shall not constitute a bar to any prosecution, penalty or administrative action under any other applicable statutory provision.

Enforcement - Act 112

(k) Definitions.—As used in this section, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings given to them in this subsection:

In addition to this is:

Violators will be fined between: \$100 - \$250 for 1st offense, \$250 - \$500 for 2nd offense, \$500 - \$1000 for subsequent offenses

Retailers will be fined between: \$100 - \$500 for 1st offense, \$500 - \$1000 for 2nd offense, \$1000-\$3000 for 3rd offense, \$500 - \$1000 for subsequent offenses.



Breaking the Cycle: Effectively Addressing Tobacco Sales Among Youth



Dear Local Magistrates and District Attorneys:

Tragically, about 95% of today's tobacco users started using before the age of 21! And e-cigarettes (or vapes), along with an increasing number of flavored products targeted at youth, only continue to escalate this problem. You and your staff play a vital role in ensuring this age group receives the education and support they need to quit tobacco for good and start taking their life in a positive direction.

So, what do youth struggling with tobacco use need?

It's not punishment. In fact, research has shown punitive measures, like school suspensions and expulsions, only lead to more negative consequences—including an increased likelihood of involvement with the criminal court system.² That's because these actions isolate individuals, rather than treating the underlying problem of nicotine addiction.

The American Lung Association in Pennsylvania has developed several programs proven effective at helping youth break free from their addiction. We urge you and your staff to consider incorporating these programs into your sentences whenever encountering youth or young adults who currently use tobacco.

Proven-Effective Tobacco Intervention & Cessation Programs

Below are a few highlights of each program. More detailed information, along with other helpful resources, can be found within this toolkit.

INDEPTH®: An alternative to citation programs. Students participate in a series of interactive educational sessions administered by an adult facilitator in either one-on-one or group format in a school or community-based setting.

Not On Tobacco® (N-O-T): For teens ages 14–19. N-O-T was designed specifically for teens and is taught by a trained and certified adult in 10 50-minute sessions. The easy-to-use method helps teens quit by addressing total health in order to develop and maintain positive behaviors.

NOT for Me Online: A self-guided, mobile-friendly online

The American Lung Association in Pennsylvania is here to help.

Together, we can break the dangerous cycle of tobacco use and reduce repeat criminal offenses for our youth. Please contact us for questions or additional support.

Contact Us

For Tobacco Prevention Programming Needs:

✉ **Michael Glantz**
Manager | Health Promotions
American Lung Association
in Pennsylvania
717-971-1152
Michael.Glantz@Lung.org

For Tobacco Enforcement Program
Questions and Private Criminal Complaints:

✉ **Derek Leshak**
Specialist | Health Promotions
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Learn more about the American Lung
Association at Lung.org.

Discussion and Q&A

- What are you seeing?
- What are your practices/responses?
 - Fines?
 - Community Service?
 - “Lecture”?
 - Referring to treatment?
 - What information/aspects of individual cases do you rely on when determining sentencing in vaping related offences?
 - Helping parents?
 - Quit
 - Support their child?
 - Addressing other behavioral or mental health problems?

Discussion and Q&A

- What if you have a case that has illegal sales/distribution alongside an addiction?
- Is intervening on vaping a potential opportunity to prevent future negative behaviors?
- What other resources or training would be helpful?

Discussion and Q&A

- What do you think about this?
 - Alabama “Vape Courts”
 - Potential benefits?
 - Privacy
 - Easier to track cases and outcomes?
 - Add uniformity to response?
 - Centralize resources

- **Other Next Steps?**

Join Us!

- Join the Advocates for Tobacco and Vape-Free Communities
 - Restorative Justice Initiative



atvfc

Advocates for Tobacco & Vape-Free Communities



Scan to sign up!

bit.ly/TFMASTF-Form

If you have questions, ideas, or would like to join ATVFC, please contact the Project Coordinator:

Nicolas Polanco | npolanco@latinoconnection.org



Thank you!