

# **The Search for the Truth**

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**A peer to peer discussion on vaping and tobacco**

2020-21

Presented by Students, Educators, and the AHA



# Introductions: AHA, Educators, and Student Panelists

Riya Subbaiah- Moderator - Friends Academy

Harrison Du - Co-Moderator - SAN

Teasia Crenshaw- Panelist - Reality Check

Emily Kalika- Panelist- Uniondale HS

Teruno Hyman- Panelist- Uniondale HS

Oluchi Chukwemeka- Panelist- Suffolk Youth Caucus



# **Committee**

**Abe Baker-Butler - SAN**

**Carissa Jachcinski - Reality Check**

**Daisy Amaris - Sewanhaka Schools**

**Devin Escobar - Uniondale Schools**

**Emily Jones - Reality Check**

**Estafani Benitez - Reality Check**

**Janine Bradley - Uniondale Schools**

**Jennifer Teich - Uniondale Schools**

**Jeovanna Serpas - Reality Check**

**Joseline Serpas - Reality Check**

**Judith Montauban - Reality Check**

**Kimberley Donis - Reality Check**

**Sergio Argueta - Uniondale Schools**

# Schools and Organizations Represented Today

Friends Academy

American Heart Association (AHA)

Students Against Nicotine (SAN)

Reality Check

Mount Sinai South Nassau

Westmed

Uniondale High School

Petro

Catholic Health

Longwood



Mount  
Sinai  
South  
Nassau



American  
Heart  
Association.

**SAN**

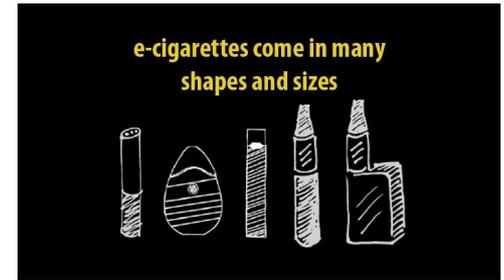


Catholic  
Health



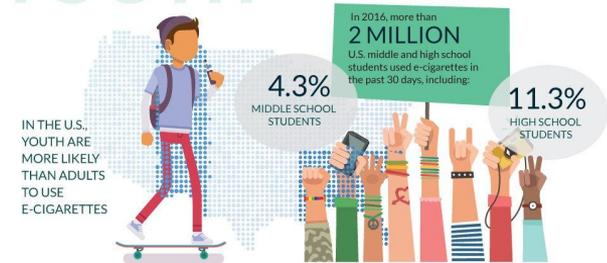
# Outline/Topics

- Trends seen in vaping and tobacco use due to COVID-19 and self-isolation
- Public Health and Health Equity: Menthol
- The Tobacco Tax
- Mental Health and Social Equity
- Myth Debunking: Juul
- Resources for Support/Quitting



## WHO IS USING E-CIGARETTES?

E-CIGARETTES ARE NOW THE MOST COMMONLY USED TOBACCO PRODUCT AMONG U.S. YOUTH.



There are plenty of interactive opportunities- you are part of this too! Add questions in the chat, participate in polls and trivia! Thank you for your support; please contact Judith or Michelle if you would like to be part of future discussions

# Your Voice Matters

- We want to hear **your voice** throughout our open discussions today! Please feel free to ask questions in the **chat** at any time, and we will also periodically pause for Q&A
- We also would like to encourage you to **take action** after this presentation in any way you can
  - AHA Resources, Letters to the Editor and Gov Cuomo, Community Initiatives



# Public Health and Social Equity

- What is **Public Health**?
  - "The science and art of preventing disease", prolonging life and improving quality of life through organized efforts and informed choices of society, organizations, communities and individuals. (APHA)
- What is **Social Equity**?
  - "The justice and fairness of social policy" (Project Human City)
- How do you think these terms are **related**?

## Organizations advocating for healthier communities by raising awareness:



American Heart Association.



How we can help these groups “**achieve their full health potential**”: “Expand efforts that incorporate and embrace fundamental principles of **health equity** that afford equal treatment of all individuals/groups (**horizontal**) and provide supplementary support for individuals/groups that are marginalized (**vertical**)” (Truth Initiative Campaign)

# Health Equity: Statistics

**88%** of **African American smokers** use mentholated tobacco products

Smoking prevalence is **50% higher** among **LGBTQ+ Americans** compared with other Americans.

Those grappling with **mental illness** comprise nearly **a third of all adult smokers**

Even among populations who smoke less than the general population (such as **African American** adults), **death and disease is greater than among the general population**, partially due to **lack of cessation resources and treatment options**.

In addition **Native Americans** and those in **low socioeconomic status** are targeted.

# Menthol: A Social Justice Issue

## What is Menthol?

- Flavor additive that **“numbs”** the harsh effects of smoke to appeal to youth, allow for deeper inhales
- “A dangerous flavor added to cigarettes, vapes, chew and other tobacco products to **hook new tobacco users”**
- “The tobacco industry has used menthol and mint as a **predatory tactic** to keep smokers smoking and introduce new smokers to a new taste.”

## Menthol as a **“Story of Inequity”**

- Menthol cigarette use is highest among **Hispanic youth (50.8%)** in comparison to **Black youth (39.6%)** and **White youth (45.8%)**.
- **Four in ten black youth** tobacco users report using menthol cigarettes.



# Menthol and Vaping in Youth

- When asked what they would do if menthol cigarettes were no longer sold, **64.6% of young menthol smokers** indicated that they would quit smoking and not use any other products.
- Between 2004 and 2014, fewer youth were using traditional cigarettes, but the **decline in use was greater in non-menthol cigarettes than menthol**. More youth and young adult smokers use menthol products than non-menthol cigarettes.
- Among cigarette smokers, menthol cigarette use was more common among **12–17 year olds (56.7%)** and **18–25 year olds (45.0%)** than among **older persons (range 30.5% to 34.7%)**. Among all adolescents, the percentage who smoked non-menthol cigarettes decreased from 2004–2010, while menthol smoking rates remained constant. Among all young adults, the percentage who smoked non-menthol cigarettes also declined, while menthol smoking rates increased.



New York State ended the sale of all flavored e-cigarettes, including menthol but did not act on menthol cigarettes. American Heart Association wants New York to end the sale of all flavored tobacco products including menthol and flavored cigars.

## Vape vs. Teens

This is for the organization for the American Heart Association and we are looking to see how vape affects teens. If you have a few minutes, please answer and I will make sure that all responses are anonymous :)

\* Required

Do you know someone who vapes? \*

- Yes  
 No

How do you think vape affects athletes? \*

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

In your opinion, how does vaping affect someone mentally as well as emotionally? \*

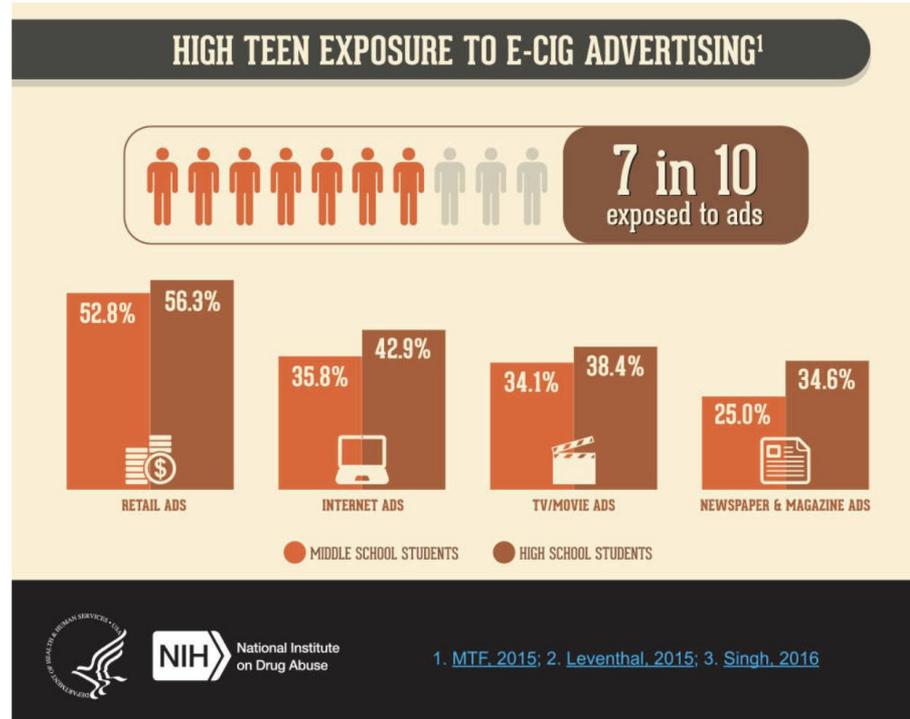
Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

If you have associated with anyone who vapes, how has that affected you personally? (If you have not, you can just say N/A) \*

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you think teens vape? \*

# Oluchi: Vape vs Teens Survey



Survey Responses:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hStlytUP4eCpJYqNzssk1tpOYFmmtH\\_ZSoFJDmdA2w/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hStlytUP4eCpJYqNzssk1tpOYFmmtH_ZSoFJDmdA2w/edit)

# Vaping and COVID-19: Open Panel Discussion

WHO states smokers are likely to contract more severe cases of COVID-19 due, in part, to reduced lung capacity.

*“New York state was at the epicenter of the coronavirus pandemic early in 2020. LI’s study showed that the prevalence of **vaping in New York was nearly 5 percent** of the population, and the coronavirus incidence rate was nearly **148 per 10,000 people** — much **higher than many other states in the U.S.**”* (Rochester University)

Sharing e-cigarettes can also increase the spread of COVID-19.

What are your thoughts about the **connection between vaping and COVID-19**?

How has the **pandemic impacted those with addiction** in society? Do you have personal experience/know others who are struggling with vaping or tobacco use?

# Resources for Support/Quitting

Quitting/Solutions

S- et a quit day

T- ell your friends and get support

A- nticipate the challenge; build up to the quit day

R- id yourself of all your addictive substances before the quit day

T- alk to your doctor/parents/counselor

**Reality Check-** This Is Quitting: “To enroll in This is Quitting, teens and young adults text DITCHVAPE to 88709. The first messages they receive will ask for their age and product usage so that they are able to receive relevant messages. Users receive one age-appropriate message per day tailored to their enrollment date or quit date, which can be set and reset via text message”

Personal stories

# ALTERNATIVES TO VAPING

- A. Find a new hobby
- B. Chew gum, drink water
- C. Exercise
- D. Join a club
- E. Focus on school
- F. Whistle or hum
- G. Crank up the radio
- H. Floss
- I. Call/text/snapchat a friend
- J. Volunteer
- K. Do laundry
- L. Organize your room
- M. Make a to do list
- N. Bake/cook
- O. Read a book
- P. Watch Netflix
- Q. Take the dog for a walk
- R. Draw
- S. Build something
- T. Do a crossword puzzle
- U. Go shopping
- V. Go to the movies
- W. Meditate
- X. Get a mani/pedi
- Y. Take a nap
- Z. Go out to dinner

# The Tobacco Tax: It's Been a Decade; We Need A Dollar

- Letters to the Editor Initiative
- “Dear Cuomo”... Raising the Tobacco Tax: It's Been A Decade
  - Videos and Social Media Efforts
  - Increased Tobacco Taxes in the 2021 Governmental Budget due April 1st
  - Lobbying/Legislative Efforts virtually and in DC
  - Capitol Hill Day
- AHA Campaign
  - Ending the sale of menthol cigarettes and flavored tobacco products
  - Get involved with the AHA and community organizations! Look **local**
  - Write on community forums: Patch
- “State legislature prohibited the sale of flavored e-cigarettes but left a huge loophole that needs to be closed” (AHA)

## This Week of Advocacy, speak up for heart health!



Support healthy futures for New York families  
Tell your legislator to fund heart healthy policies.

This is AHA's Week of Advocacy here in New York. We are coming together to let our lawmakers know we want a healthier New York. **Will you take a moment to email your legislators and remind them of the heart healthy policies we'd like to see included in the state's budget?**

With the state budget due April 1, we'd like to see the following included:

- An increase in tobacco taxes by at least \$1
- Adequate funding for programs preventing obesity, diabetes, and hypertension
- Funding to help fight food and nutrition insecurity

Now is the time to prioritize public health and these measures will help.

Send an email to your officials with  
one click!

Title

\*



Full Name

\*

Address

\*

Zip



city and state not required

Phone

\*

Email

\*

 **Send Email**

I wanted to take a moment to share with you a few heart healthy priorities that I care about. As your constituent, I think it's more important than ever to make sure we're doing all we can to keep New Yorkers healthy. The following measures can help, and should be included in the enacted budget.

Send me emails about this campaign

Send me text messages about this campaign



**NEW REVENUES, PUBLIC HEALTH BENEFITS & COST SAVINGS  
FROM A \$1.00 CIGARETTE TAX INCREASE IN NEW YORK**

- The current state cigarette tax is \$4.35 per pack (2nd among all states and DC).
- Annual health care expenditures in New York directly caused by tobacco use are \$10.39 billion.

**Projected New Annual Revenue from Increasing the Cigarette Tax by \$1.00 Per Pack: \$38.87 million**

New Annual Revenue is the amount of additional new revenue the first full year the tax increase is in effect. The state will collect less new revenue if it fails to apply the rate increase to all cigarettes and other tobacco products held in wholesaler and retailer inventories on the effective date.

Projected Public Health Benefits for New York from the Cigarette Tax Rate Increase	
<i>Percent decrease in youth (under age 18) smoking:</i>	9.4%
<i>Youth under age 18 kept from becoming adult smokers:</i>	22,200
<i>Reduction in young adult (18-24 years old) smokers:</i>	4,800
<i>Current adult smokers who would quit:</i>	53,900
<i>Premature smoking-caused deaths prevented:</i>	20,000
<i>5-Year reduction in the number of smoking-affected pregnancies and births:</i>	5,100
<i>5-Year health care cost savings from fewer smoking-caused lung cancer cases:</i>	\$10.81 million
<i>5-Year health care cost savings from fewer smoking-affected pregnancies and births:</i>	\$13.96 million
<i>5-Year health care cost savings from fewer smoking-caused heart attacks &amp; strokes:</i>	\$23.59 million
<i>5-Year Medicaid program savings for the state:</i>	\$61.90 million
<i>Long-term health care cost savings from adult &amp; youth smoking declines:</i>	\$1.56 billion

12.28.20 TRK / January 6, 2020

- Small tax increase amounts do not produce significant public health benefits or cost savings because the cigarette companies can easily offset the beneficial impact of such small increases with temporary price cuts, coupons, and other promotional discounting. Splitting a tax rate increase into separate, smaller increases in successive years will similarly diminish or eliminate the public health benefits and related cost savings (as well as reduce the amount of new revenue).
- Raising state tax rates on other tobacco products (OTPs), including e-cigarettes, to parallel the increased cigarette tax rate will bring the state additional revenue, public health benefits, and cost savings (and promote tax equity). With unequal rates, the state loses revenue each time a cigarette smoker switches to other tobacco products taxed at a lower rate. To parallel the new \$5.35 per pack cigarette tax, the state's new OTP tax rate should be a percentage of the wholesale price with minimum tax rates for each major OTP category linked to the state cigarette tax rate on a per-package or per-dose basis.

## Tax Example:



**American Heart Association.**

Dear Editor,

The American Heart Association is one of many public health groups calling on Gov. Cuomo to include an increased tax on tobacco products in his 2021 Executive Budget.

Every year, nearly 22,290 deaths in New York are caused by smoking. Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death and a significant contributing factor to heart disease and stroke, the nation's No. 1, and No. 5, causes of death. Smoking accounts for about 30% of all cancer deaths in the nation, including about 80% of all lung cancer deaths.

An increase of \$1 per pack of cigarettes, and tax parity on other tobacco products, could change that. The \$1.00 increase in the cigarette tax alone would prevent 24,400 premature smoking-caused deaths. AND, it means that there would be \$30.40 million in new annual revenue.

Youth are very sensitive to cost. The cigarette tax increase would mean 29,500 youth under age 18 would be kept from becoming adult smokers. It would also mean 6,500 fewer smokers among 18-to-24-year-olds. Tax parity on other tobacco products would mean even more reductions; fewer kids picking up vaping; and would ensure that more tobacco users quit instead of switching to a cheaper product.

Increasing the price of tobacco products is proven to reduce smoking. This tax would save thousands of New York's kids from a lifetime of tobacco use and nicotine addiction. Any child that we can keep from picking up their first cigarette means another life saved.

**AHA Campaign**

# TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

- Coordinated school strategy
  - School staff integration
  - School-based community dialogues
  - Engaging kids through Kids Heart Challenge, American Heart Challenge, curriculum lessons and more
  - Working with American Dance Movement, the Truth Campaign and more
- Inspire youth to lead peers in healthy habits
- National day of action



## CHANGING POLICY

- Restricting sales to adults 21 and older
- Preventing youth access and prohibiting marketing to kids
- Including e-cigarettes in comprehensive smoke-free laws
- E-cigarette taxation
- Removing flavored tobacco products from the market
- Supporting robust FDA regulation over all tobacco products



## Menthol Example:

Dear Editor:

Last year the state legislature prohibited the sale of flavored e-cigarettes but left a huge loophole that needs to be closed. Flavored e-cigarettes re-ignited the spark surrounding flavored tobacco products for youth and because of it, smoking has lost its stigma. The result is more youth turning to flavored tobacco products, which is problematic given that youth were already the group who used menthol cigarettes the most, specifically Black youth.

More than 54% of kids ages 12-17 who smoke use menthol cigarettes. For Black youth smokers in the same age group, 7 in 10 use menthol cigarettes. So why did we leave them on the market? Eliminating the sale of flavored e-cigarettes but not menthol cigarettes perpetuates the disproportionate marketing and advertising done by the tobacco industry in Black communities. The harsh reality of this is increased health disparities and higher rates of death and tobacco-related diseases among communities of color.

New York needs to end the sale of all flavored tobacco products once and for all. Every day that these products remain on the market means more kids beginning their addiction. We've already seen the first uptick in youth rates to tobacco use in 20 years. Without comprehensive action, youth who were already addicted to e-cigarettes are simply switching to the next best thing, menthol cigarettes. It makes sense, menthol creates a cooling effect, masks the harshness of tobacco, and suppresses coughing. Simply put, menthol makes it easier to start smoking and harder to quit.

With public health groups like the American Heart Association and social justice groups like the NAACP pushing for an end to these products it's time for New York State to follow Massachusetts and nearly 80 other municipalities and end the sale of all flavored tobacco products.

Sincerely,

# Myth Debunking

- Effects of Dopamine: “There is a misconception that [vaping] releases pleasure when it actually releases desire. Vaping often becomes a chore rather than feeling good. Addressing this misconception is crucial because desire is different from a high, which a vape doesn't produce.”
- “It’s just water vapor” -Chemical Substances, Oil Substances

# SMOKING CIGARETTES vs VAPING - the History

## CIGARETTES

- In the early 1900's about 50% of men and 33% of women smoked
- No one knew the dangers of tobacco.
- It wasn't until the 1950s and 60s that most people started becoming concerned about the health effects of cigarettes.
- Smoking rates in the United States have dropped by more than half from 1965 to 2016, falling from 42% to 15.5% of US adults
- WHY?

## VAPING

- Around 2006, vaping was first introduced in Europe, and it wasn't long before it made its way into the US too.
- At least a quarter of teens in the US today say they've tried vaping, while about 6% of high schoolers vape regularly.
- No one truly knows the dangers of vaping
- If you wait to find out the dangers it may be too late like so many cigarette smokers have.
- Will use start to decline like cigarettes?

# Trivia on Kahoot!

<https://play.kahoot.it/v2/?quizId=80d4d3b9-efcf-458e-9876-dddba3ac0626>