



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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New Campaign Targets Tobacco Industry's Deceptive Marketing to Youth

SACRAMENTO - In an effort to combat the tobacco industry's latest marketing strategies aimed at getting youth hooked on nicotine, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) today launched a new "Flavors Hook Kids" campaign.

The campaign warns parents and concerned adults about the increasing availability of flavored tobacco products targeted to teens. The campaign also highlights how easy it is for kids to purchase flavored tobacco products online.

"Flavors disguise the harshness of tobacco and make smoking seem harmless, when we know it's not," said CDPH Director and State Public Health Officer Dr. Karen Smith. "Innocent sounding e-cigarette flavors like Cherry Crush and Cotton Candy could lead to a lifetime of nicotine addiction."

More than 80 percent of youth who have tried tobacco products started with a flavored product – there are more than 15,500 e-cigarette flavors on the market.

Also increasing in popularity among teenagers are new e-cigarette devices called "pod mods." One in particular, JUUL, looks like a flash drive. It is easily hidden from parents and teachers because of its deceptive design. Each JUUL cartridge contains the same amount of nicotine as an entire pack of traditional cigarettes.

"We encourage parents to talk to their kids about the significant risks of nicotine addiction and tobacco use – which can impact brain development and cause asthma and respiratory disease," said Dr. Smith. "There's simply no safe level of tobacco consumption, and it is far too easy for teens to get interested and hooked due to the tobacco industry's deceptive tactics."

E-cigarettes are the most common tobacco product used by youth in the U.S. In 2016, 13.6 percent of California high school students reported using tobacco products, and more than half (8.6 percent) reporting using e-cigarettes, including "pod mods." Research has shown minors can successfully buy e-cigarette products online 94 percent-of the time.

The new “Flavors Hook Kids” campaign appears in seven languages including English, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Vietnamese and Tagalog. Learn more [here](#).

About the California Tobacco Control Program

The California Department of Public Health’s Tobacco Control Program was established by the Tobacco Tax and Health Protection Act of 1988. California’s comprehensive approach has changed social norms around tobacco-use and secondhand smoke. In November 2016, Californians passed Proposition 56 which funds tobacco-use prevention programs, a new state Oral Health Program and research on tobacco-related illnesses such as cancer and heart disease.

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