



Dedicated to protecting and improving the health and environment of the people of Colorado

September 14, 2018

Dear School Partner,

Colorado kids are vaping at epidemic levels, according to recently released [Healthy Kids Colorado Survey](#) (HKCS) data. E-vapor products, such as JUUL and other e-cigarettes, almost always contain nicotine and come in many shapes and sizes. Colorado students are using vape products (27 percent) at double the national rate (13 percent) and at nearly four times the rate of traditional cigarettes.

E-cigarette use among youth is not safe. Nicotine is highly addictive and can harm brain development, which continues until about age 25. In a [statement](#) released earlier this week the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said "The disturbing and accelerating trajectory of use we're seeing in youth, and the resulting path to addiction, must end."

We want to partner with you in addressing this serious health issue. The following are immediate actions that schools can take to help reduce tobacco use:

1. Strengthen and Communicate Tobacco Free Schools Policies:

Youth use and possession of vaping devices on school property are prohibited under Colorado's Tobacco Free Schools law. Please take advantage of the time you have with your faculty, staff, students and parents to become familiar with the new devices, some of which are shaped like USB flash drives. Review your Tobacco Free Schools policy and enforcement protocols and communicate them to students, staff, families and visitors. To learn more, visit: <http://rmc.org/news/constructing-effective-tobacco-free-schools-policy-training/> or contact RMC Health at: info@rmc.org

2. Actively Monitor and Enforce Tobacco Free Schools Policies:

Consistent enforcement of the Tobacco Free Schools law, including in-school disciplinary measures and alternatives to suspension, is a critical step in helping youth avoid a lifetime of nicotine addiction. We strongly recommend schools use in-school alternatives to suspension for youth who violate the tobacco free school policy, such as the [Second Chance](#) program. Contact RMC Health at: info@rmc.org or visit: <https://www.secondchancetobacco.org/>.

3. Promote Quitting among Students and Staff

Taking on nicotine addiction is tough, and for most people it takes multiple tries to successfully quit. Encouraging use of proven programs helps students and staff get the support they need to be successful.

For free web and phone-based cessation programs designed especially for teens who vape or use other tobacco products:

- <https://teen.smokefree.gov/>

For free, comprehensive phone and web-based cessation services that offer personalized coaching (for ages 12 and up) and quit medications (for ages 18 and up):

- www.coquitline.org or 1-800-QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669)

4. Encourage Teachers, Staff and Parents to Engage Students in Conversations About Vaping:

We know from research that young people benefit from conversations with their parents or other trusted adults, like teachers, coaches and counselors. Fact-based conversations where a trusted adult can tell teens the truth about the dangers and risks of vaping without judgment can be very productive, and actually change teens' minds. For resources to help parents, teachers and coaches talk to kids about vaping:

- <https://www.tobaccofreeco.org/know-the-facts/>.

5. Provide Reliable and Accurate Education about Vaping:

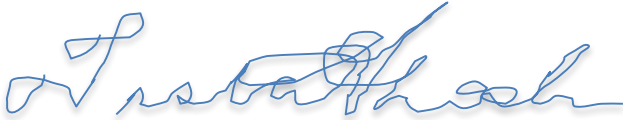
For classroom modules to help teens learn about the health effects of vaping and other tobacco use, see the Stanford University School of Medicine Toolkit, here:

- <https://med.stanford.edu/tobaccopreventiontoolkit/E-Cigs.html>



The onset of a new school year brings great excitement and opportunity to revisit district priorities and policies. If you have questions or would like support in updating, implementing and enforcing your Tobacco Free Schools policy, please contact the tobacco control program at your local public health department. We remain committed to protecting the health of all youth in Colorado.

Sincerely,



Tista Ghosh, M.D., M.P.H.
Interim Chief Medical Officer
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Attachment: [2017 HKCS Tobacco Data Brief](#)





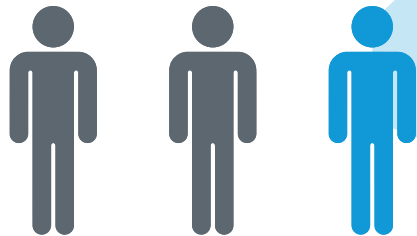
The Healthy Kids Colorado Survey is the state's only comprehensive survey on the health and well-being of young people. In 2017, the survey sampled approximately 56,000 youth from 190 randomly selected middle and high schools statewide. The voluntary, biennial survey

collects a wide range of health and behavioral information that helps public, private and community organizations better understand the youth they serve and support them in making healthy choices. The data below represents high school youth.

TOBACCO USE

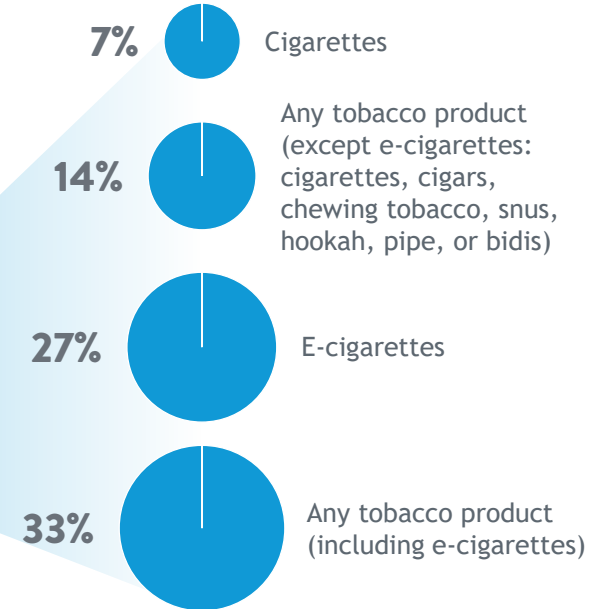
33%

of Colorado youth are using nicotine.*

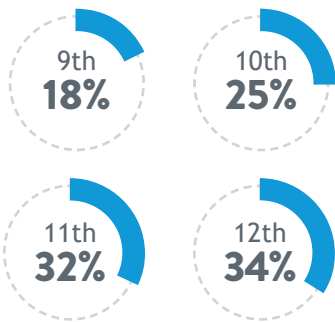


*All tobacco products including cigarettes, chew, e-cigarettes, hookah, cigars and others

CURRENT USE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS

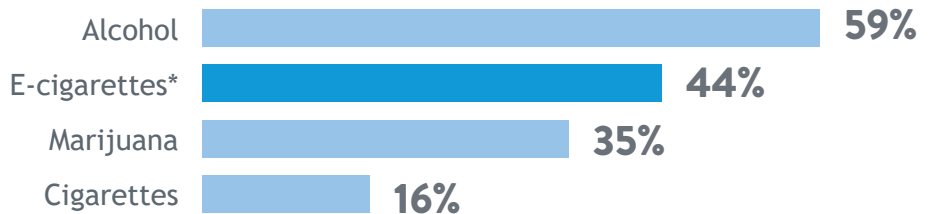


CURRENT USE OF E-CIGARETTES BY GRADE



E-CIGARETTES ARE THE SECOND MOST TRIED SUBSTANCE AMONG COLORADO YOUTH

Have used substances at least once in their life.



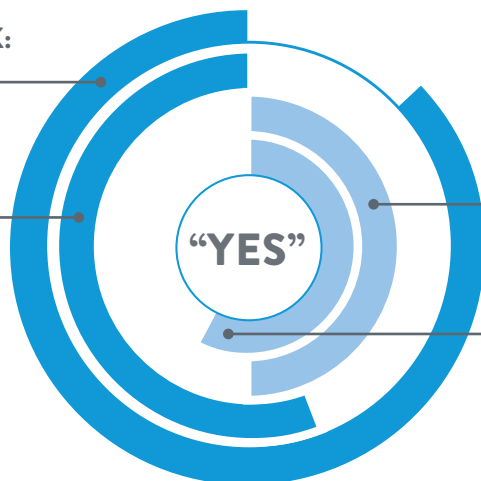
*Does not include marijuana

RISK PERCEPTION AND ACCESS Among all Colorado youth

DO YOUTH THINK:

Smoking is risky? **87%**

It's easy to get cigarettes? **56%**



Vaping is risky? **50%**

It's easy to get e-cigarettes? **58%**

Are cigarette smokers trying to quit?



Are youth exposed to secondhand smoke or vapor at home?



HEALTH DISPARITIES

Demographic breakdown of tobacco users.

CURRENT USE BY RACE / ETHNICITY

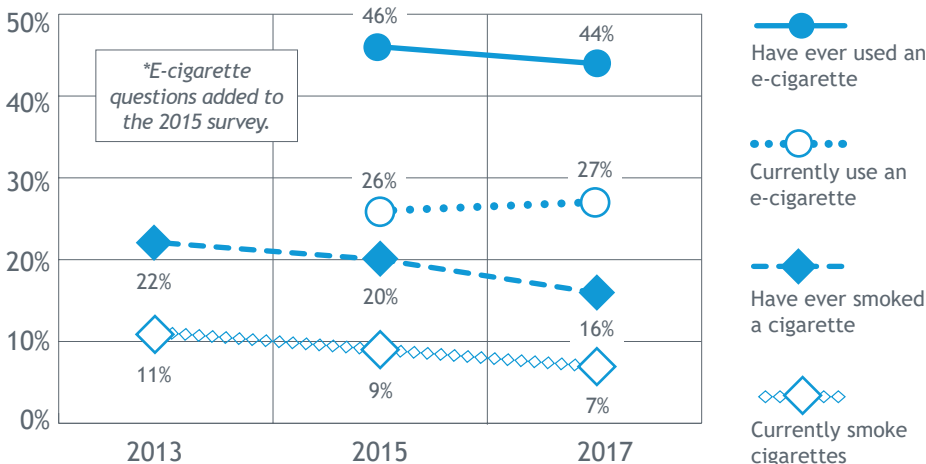
CIGARETTE		E-CIGARETTE	
5%	Black	17%	
3%	Asian	17%	
7%	Hispanic	25%	
7%	White	29%	
19%	Pacific Islander	33%	
10%	American Indian	31%	
11%	Multiracial	30%	

CURRENT USE BY SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

CIGARETTE		E-CIGARETTE	
6%	Heterosexual	27%	
17%	Gay or Lesbian	31%	
15%	Bisexual	32%	
33%	Transgender	44%	

CDPHE acknowledges that social, economic and environmental inequities result in adverse health outcomes and have a greater impact than individual choices. Reducing health disparities through systems change can help improve opportunities for all Coloradans.

CIGARETTE SMOKING AND VAPING TRENDS



ADULTS CAN HELP PREVENT YOUTH E-CIGARETTE USE



FAMILY RULES

Youth who have clear family rules are 39% LESS likely to vape.



TALKING WITH PARENTS

Youth who can ask a parent for help are 31% LESS likely to vape.



SCHOOL SAFETY

Youth who feel safe at school are 28% LESS likely to vape.



EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Youth who participate are 12% LESS likely to vape.



PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Youth whose parents know where they are and who they are with are 49% LESS likely to vape.



CURFEW

Youth whose parents know if they don't come home on time are 38% LESS likely to vape.



SKIPPING SCHOOL

Youth who did not skip school in the past month are 52% LESS likely to vape.



TOBACCO USE AMONG YOUTH BY HEALTH STATISTICS REGIONS 2017

The Healthy Kids Colorado Survey is the state’s only comprehensive survey on the health and well-being of young people. In 2017, the survey sampled approximately 56,000 youth from 190 randomly selected middle and high schools statewide. The voluntary, biennial survey collects a wide range of health and behavioral information that helps public, private and community organizations better understand the youth they serve and support them in making healthy choices. Smoking and vaping prevalence among high school students varies by region. The maps below show the proportion of youth by region who reported smoking or using electronic cigarettes at least once in the past 30 days.

CURRENT USE BY REGION

No Data Available



0% – 5%



6% – 10%



11% – 15%



16% – 20%



21% – 25%



26% – 30%



31% – 35%



36% – 40%



COLORADO AVERAGES

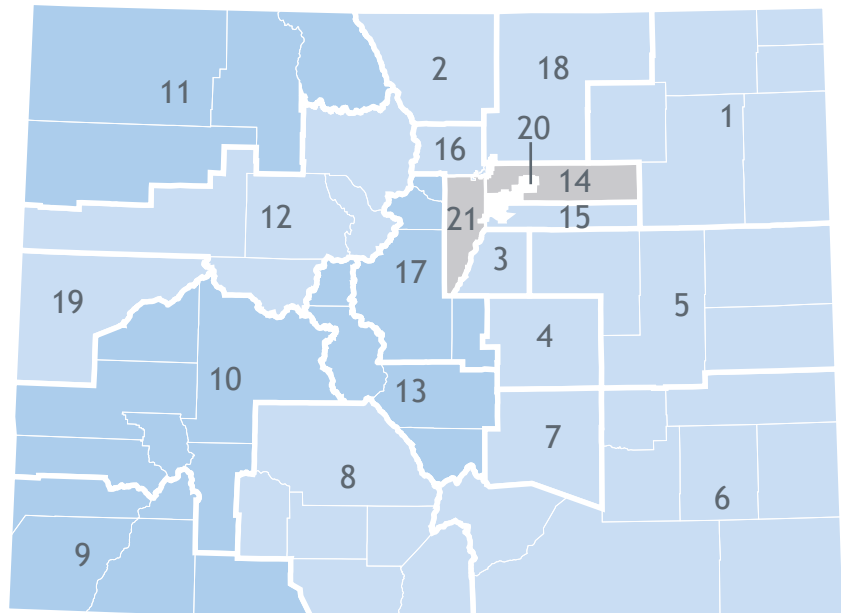
Current cigarette use:

7%

Current e-cigarette use:

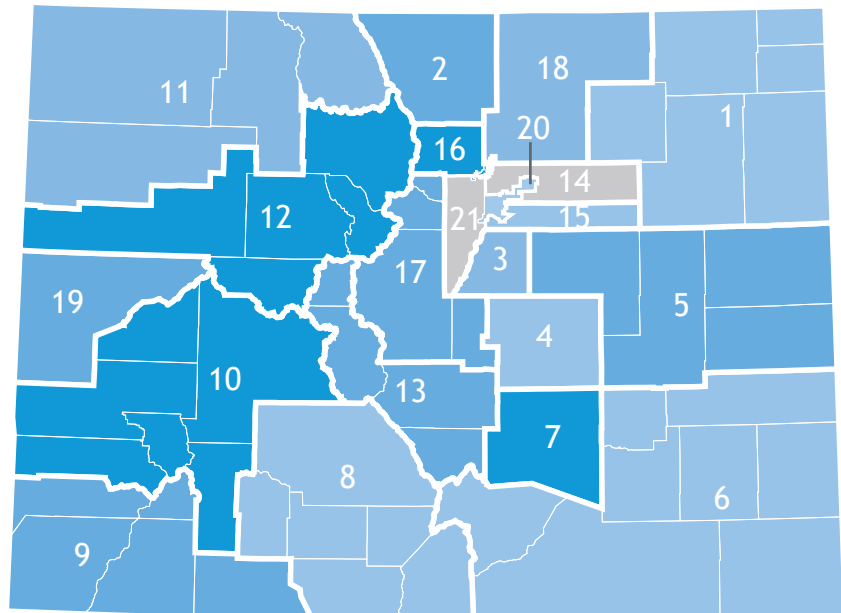
27%

CIGARETTE



Region	%
1	10%
2	7%
3	6%
4	7%
5	10%
6	10%
7	9%
8	7%
9	13%
10	13%
11	12%
12	9%
13	14%
14	ND
15	6%
16	8%
17	11%
18	8%
19	8%
20	5%
21	ND

E-CIGARETTE



Region	%
1	21%
2	31%
3	30%
4	23%
5	35%
6	23%
7	36%
8	21%
9	34%
10	38%
11	29%
12	36%
13	35%
14	ND
15	24%
16	36%
17	32%
18	26%
19	31%
20	18%
21	ND