

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **SAFE Glen Cove Coalition- Justice Department and FDA Announce Task Force to Curb the Distribution and Sale of Illegal E-Cigarettes**

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced the creation of a federal multi-agency task force to combat the illegal distribution and sale of e-cigarettes.

Along with the FDA and the Justice Department, the task force will bring together multiple law enforcement partners, including the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS); the U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS); and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), to coordinate and streamline efforts to bring all available criminal and civil tools to bear against the illegal distribution and sale of e-cigarettes responsible for nicotine addiction among American youth. Additional agencies may join the task force in the coming weeks and months.

Unauthorized e-cigarettes and vaping products continue to jeopardize the health of Americans – particularly children and adolescents. This interagency Task Force is dedicated to protecting youth by combatting the unlawful sale and distribution of these products. The establishment of this Task Force makes clear that vigorous enforcement of tobacco laws is a government-wide priority.

Enforcement against illegal e-cigarettes is a multi-pronged issue that necessitates a multi-pronged response. This governmental collaboration, including the creation of this new Task Force, will bring the collective resources and experience of the federal government to address this pressing public health issue.”

The 2023 National Youth Tobacco Survey found that about 2.1 million youths reported currently using e-cigarettes. 10 % of high school students and almost 5% of middle school students reported currently using e-cigarettes, and more than one in 4 of those e-cigarette users reported daily e-cigarette use. Manufacturers, distributors and retailers market a wide range of products that appeal directly to school-age users, such as candy and fruit flavors, some of which come in devices designed to be easily concealed.

Youth use of tobacco products in any form, including e-cigarettes, is unsafe. According to the CDC, nicotine poses unique dangers to young people. In addition to being highly addictive, nicotine can harm the developing adolescent brain, which continues to develop until about age 25. Young people who use nicotine may also be at risk for addiction to other drugs.

To date, the FDA has authorized the sale of 23 specific tobacco-flavored e-cigarette products and devices. These are the only e-cigarette products that currently may be lawfully marketed and sold in the United States. To date, the FDA has issued more than 1,100 warning letters to manufacturers, importers, distributors and retailers for illegally selling and/or distributing

unauthorized new tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, and has filed civil money penalty complaints against more than 55 manufacturers and 140 retailers for the manufacture and/or sale of unauthorized tobacco products. In addition, the FDA and the Justice Department have obtained injunctions against six manufacturers to stop them from manufacturing and selling unauthorized e-cigarette products.

The federal task force will focus on several topics, including investigating and prosecuting new criminal, civil, seizure and forfeiture actions under the PACT Act; the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FDCA), as amended by the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (TCA); and other authorities. Violations of these statutes can result in felony convictions and significant criminal fines and civil monetary penalties. They can also result in seizures of unauthorized products, which can help to make illegal e-cigarettes less accessible, including to young people. Through their participation in the task force, USMS will help the FDA and the Department effectuate seizures of unauthorized e-cigarettes within the United States.

The Justice Department is also collaborating with ATF and USPIS on potential criminal and civil enforcement actions under the Prevent All Cigarette Trafficking Act of 2009 (PACT Act). The PACT Act requires online sellers of ENDS products to register with ATF and to verify the age of purchasers both at the point of sale and the point of delivery, as well as to comply with tax collection provisions and state and local laws. The task force announced today will support these actions and coordinate enforcement strategies the FDA and the Justice Department are working on with multiple agency partners.

Finally, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), which releases reports about cigarette, smokeless tobacco and e-cigarette marketing, and enforces various statutory and regulatory prohibitions on false and misleading advertising, will support the activities of the task force, including by sharing its knowledge about the marketplace for vaping products.

For more information on e-cigarette regulation, including legal compliance and enforcement efforts, see the FDA's website at <https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products> and the ATF's website at <https://www.atf.gov/alcohol-tobacco/vapes-and-e-cigarettes>.

Keep aware, stay informed and avoid negative Live SAFE and work ardently to protect your youth through prevention education to avoid the negative consequence of nicotine addiction.

SAFE, Inc. is the only alcohol and substance abuse prevention, intervention, and education agency in the City of Glen Cove. The Coalition is concerned about all combustible and electronic products with marijuana and tobacco and youth consumption. The Agency is employing environmental strategies to educate and update the community regarding the negative consequences in collaboration with Carol Meschkow, Manager- Tobacco Action Coalition of Long Island. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow [www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition](http://www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition) or to learn more about electronic products visit the Vaping Facts and Myths Page of SAFE's website to learn more about how vaping is detrimental to your health [www.safeglencove.org](http://www.safeglencove.org).

