

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: Targeting Teens to Vape**

Vaping is an important public health problem among adolescents in the U.S. More than 10% of high school and 4.6% of middle school students currently vape and approximately half of students who ever used e-cigarettes continue to do so. According to the American Lung Association, the most frequent reason youth use e-cigarettes is vaping by a "friend or family member" (39 percent), and nearly a third (31 percent) liked the availability of flavors like mint, candy, fruit, or chocolate.

Vaping devices heat a liquid into an aerosol inhaled into the lungs. These devices are called vapes, mods, e-hookahs, and vape pens. They have different appearances but work similarly. There is great concern among the research community that the increasing popularity of vaping may "re-normalize" smoking, reversing hard-won gains of the past in the global effort to curb smoking would be catastrophic. Smoking is still the leading preventable cause of death, responsible for over 480,000 deaths in the U.S. each year.

Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes), also known as e-cigs, vapes, vape pens, and electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), are very popular among adolescents. Experts report that e-cigarettes are the most popular product among teenage tobacco users, and in 2023, 2.1 million youths in the United States were vapers. In November 2023, the CDC reported e-cigarettes were the most reported currently used tobacco product among middle school (4.6 percent) and high school students (10 percent). Of students currently using e-cigarettes, about 25 percent use e-cigarettes daily, and 89 percent use flavored e-cigarettes.

According to researchers at the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), vaping nicotine and/or marijuana is incredibly dangerous. The pods contain very large concentrations which make using them more addictive than alternative methods of administration thus causing an epidemic of nicotine use and addiction among adolescents and young adults. Adolescents are driving the demand for easy-to-disguise, school supply look-alike vapes with flavored liquids.

Manufacturers have convinced teens that vaping products are safer than cigarettes, ignoring real health risks. One of the scariest aspects of vaping is the misperception that many teenagers and young adults have in their belief that vaping is healthier than smoking cigarettes. Most nicotine vapers start very early, about age 14. Vaping devices are also easily concealed, allowing for their sneaky use in classrooms or bathrooms, and thus more frequent inhalations, higher doses, and more addictions.

The liquid used in e-cigarettes can be dangerous, apart from its intended use. Both children and adults have been poisoned by swallowing, breathing, or absorbing the liquid through skin or eyes.

E-cigarettes have been linked to thousands of cases of serious lung injury, some resulting in death. Researchers have found harmful ingredients in vapes, including ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs; flavorings that are linked to serious lung disease; volatile compounds like benzene, which is found in car exhaust, and even toxic metals, like nickel, tin, and lead. And we are still learning about the chemical reactions that occur in vapes. As the ingredients, nicotine or cannabis when heated create new molecules and acetals that are not included in the ingredients listed or regulations testing.

Vaping can worsen asthma and other existing lung diseases. Breathing in the harmful chemicals from vaping products can cause irreversible lung damage, lung disease and, in some cases, death. Some chemicals in vaping products can cause cardiovascular disease and biological changes associated with cancer development. Of course, vapers are also at risk for addiction from nicotine in vaping products.

Adolescents and young adults are increasingly turning to vaping nicotine and marijuana, blissfully unaware of dangers these substances introduce to their brains, lungs, and overall health. Like heroin, cocaine, or other addictive drugs, nicotine induces drug-related feelings of pleasure and well-being by causing a release of dopamine. In addition, it induces releases of serotonin, important in appetite suppression, as well as glutamate, involved in learning and memory. But over time, the pleasure is gone, and the drug is needed to feel normal. Sometimes craving can trigger using alcohol, marijuana, or other drugs of abuse.

Nicotine addiction has been recognized by researchers as easy to acquire as a teen and hard to quit. It's important for everyone to realize threats caused by teenage vaping so we may better educate and protect them.

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. Annually the Coalition partners with the Tobacco Action Coalition of LI (TAC), the Glen Cove Youth Bureau and Glen Cove School District Health Education teachers to raise awareness of the need to educate students on the dangers of all tobacco products, reduce youth's exposure to tobacco marketing at their local retailers, and to protect the public from second-hand and drifting smoke outside while they recreate, dine or even on the worksite grounds.

To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow [www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition](https://www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition) or to learn more about electronic products visit the Youth and Tobacco Use and Vaping Facts and Myths Pages of SAFE's website to learn more about how vaping is detrimental to your health [www.safeglencove.org](http://www.safeglencove.org).