

For Immediate Release

Contact: Susan Ringler-Cerniglia, Communications Manager
Washtenaw County Health Department
ringlers@ewashtenaw.org
734-544-6759

Vaping increasing among Washtenaw County Youth *Head back to school nicotine free*

YPSILANTI, Mich., Sept. 5, 2018 – Less than two percent of Washtenaw County high school students reported smoking cigarettes in the past 30 days, according to the [2017-2018 Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth](#) – a decrease from almost four percent in 2015-2016. While cigarette smoking may be declining among youth, an alternative to this traditional method is on the rise: electronic vapor products.

The same survey indicated over eighteen percent of Washtenaw County high school students used electronic vapor products during the past 30 days; an increase from eleven percent in 2015-2016.

“Although we have made significant progress in protecting our youth from tobacco-related health harms, we still have a long way to go,” said Kimberly Collom, MS, health educator at the Washtenaw County Health Department. Each year 5,200 Michigan kids under age 18 become new, daily smokers. 213,000 kids under 18 in Michigan today will ultimately die prematurely from smoking.

Help is available

As students head back to school, the Washtenaw County Health Department encourages parents and health care providers to talk to kids about tobacco use and to remind kids that spit tobacco and electronic vapor products are not safe alternatives to smoking cigarettes. Providing a tobacco-free example and home environment can also help to protect kids from tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure.

For young people who have already begun to use tobacco and electronic vapor products and want to quit, the [Michigan Tobacco Quitline](#) provides services for Michigan youth of any age. Young people can call the Quitline at 1-800-784-8669 or 1-800-QUIT-NOW and receive free telephone counseling to help them quit tobacco. The Quitline also offers a free text messaging program and a self-guided online program to help youth quit tobacco. The Smokefree Teen website - teen.smokefree.gov - also provides tools to help young people quit.

Health effects of youth tobacco use

The use of products containing nicotine in any form, including electronic vapor products, is unsafe for youth, according to the U.S. Surgeon General. The brain is not fully developed until the early to mid-20s. Exposure to nicotine during periods of significant brain development, including adolescence, can disrupt the growth of parts of the brain that control attention, learning, and susceptibility to addiction. Effects can be long-lasting and can include lower impulse control and mood disorders.

Washtenaw County Health Department
555 Towner Street • Ypsilanti, MI 48198
Phone: 734-544-6700 • Fax: 734-544-6705
publichealth.ewashtenaw.org



Environmental Health Division
705 N. Zeeb Road • Ann Arbor, MI 48103
Phone: 734-222-3800 • Fax: 734-222-3930
environmentalhealth.ewashtenaw.org



“Far too many of our children are still using tobacco and being exposed to the health harms caused by secondhand smoke,” says Collom. “It is essential that we address e-cigarette use among young people, and do everything we can to prevent youth tobacco use, which can lead to a lifetime of addiction to a deadly product.”

More funding needed to fight youth tobacco use

Michigan spends \$4.59 billion annually on health care costs directly caused by smoking, including \$1.36 billion in state Medicaid costs. The tobacco industry spends an estimated \$320 million to market their products in Michigan each year. In contrast, Michigan spends only \$1.63 million on tobacco prevention and control programming. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, the more young people are exposed to cigarette advertising and promotional activities, the more likely they are to smoke. Eighty percent of underage smokers choose brands from among the top three most heavily advertised.

About Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth

The Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth (MiPHY) is an online student health survey offered by the Michigan Departments of Education and Health and Human Services to support local and regional needs assessment. The MiPHY provides student results on health risk behaviors including substance use, violence, physical activity, nutrition, sexual behavior, and emotional health in grades 7, 9, and 11. For more, visit the [Michigan Department of Education's website](#).

Washtenaw County Health Department

Washtenaw County Health Department promotes health and works to prevent disease and injury in our community. Our mission is to assure, in partnership with the community, the conditions necessary for people to live healthy lives through prevention and protection programs. Visit the Washtenaw County Health Department online at www.washtenaw.org/health or call 734-544-6700.

###

Washtenaw County Health Department
555 Towner Street • Ypsilanti, MI 48198
Phone: 734-544-6700 • Fax: 734-544-6705
publichealth.ewashtenaw.org



Environmental Health Division
705 N. Zeeb Road • Ann Arbor, MI 48103
Phone: 734-222-3800 • Fax: 734-222-3930
environmentalhealth.ewashtenaw.org