

# End the dangerous vaping epidemic

The Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics supports reducing the harm caused by vaping amongst youth by increasing the tax on vaping liquids commensurate with tax on cigarettes; re-apportioning tax revenue from vape product sales to prevent initiation and enforce age restrictions on purchase; ban all vape and tobacco flavors, including menthol.

## Issue

In Washington State, vaping products are taxed at substantially lower rates relative to the tax on cigarettes with equivalent nicotine content. On average, the tax on vape products is only 6% that of cigarettes.

- The numbers of youth vaping **increased** by 2 million in the last year; 28% of high school students and 11% of middle school students said they have used e-cigarettes within the past month.
- JUUL and other vaping products pose substantial risks of nicotine addiction, lung injury and long-term health effects to youths, whose developing brains are particularly susceptible to addiction.
- One JUULpod is designed to replace an *entire* pack of cigarettes in both amount of nicotine and nicotine strength.
- A new study shows that mint was the most popular flavor of e-cigarettes used by U.S. teens in 2019. Flavoring agents contain toxic chemicals and are associated with an increased likelihood of continuing vaping and more frequent use.



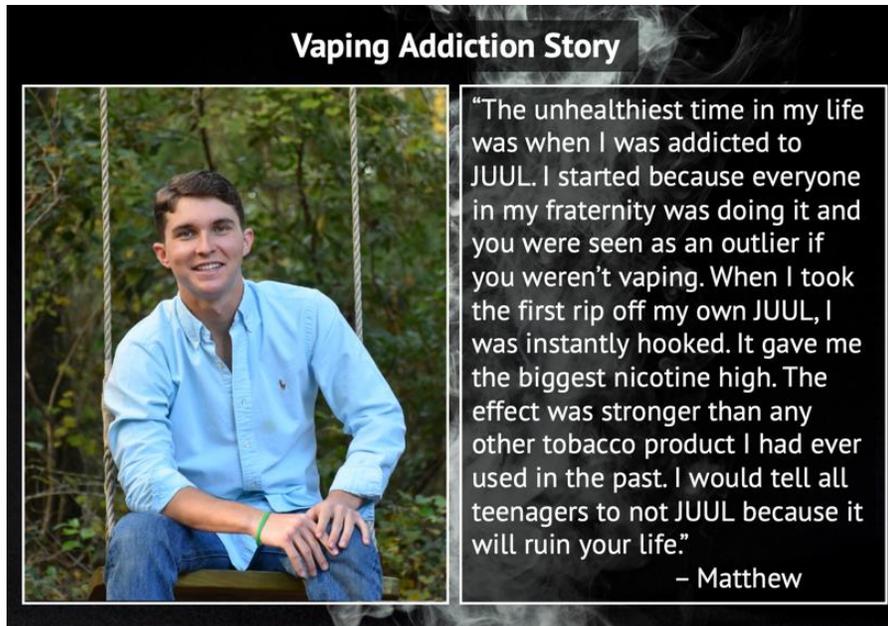
## Background

Raising taxes on tobacco products is a highly effective public health strategy to reduce tobacco use among youth and adults from all racial and socioeconomic groups. Young people are most sensitive to changes in price due to their lower incomes and shorter usage history. A 10% increase in cigarette price resulted in a 3-5% decrease in overall cigarette consumption (The importance of tobacco taxes, 2019).

Studies conducted in 2009 and 2018 found that increases in state-level excise taxes on cigarettes were associated with a decline in cigarette smoking among youths. Based on experience with cigarette taxes, we predict youth vaping in Washington would decrease by 3700-6200 middle- and high-schoolers with the proposed vape tax increase.

## Legislative Asks

- Increase taxes on vaping products according to nicotine content, equivalent to tax rates on cigarettes.
- The tax increase on vaping products should be immediate to have the strongest effect on behaviors.
- Tax revenue should be allocated to enforcement of vaping laws and prevention of vaping initiation.
- All flavors, including menthol, should be banned from vaping products.



## References

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