



Eric J. Holcomb
Governor

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State Health Commissioner

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Dear School Administrators:

This letter is to alert you to emerging youth tobacco use trends and products that are likely in your schools and provide you with free resources to help you address this concerning public health problem.

E-cigarettes are currently the most commonly used tobacco product among Indiana youth. While traditional cigarette use rates among Hoosier youth have decreased over the last two decades, e-cigarette use has more than doubled among youth since 2012 based on data from the Indiana Youth Tobacco Survey. Sales of JUUL, an e-cigarette shaped like a USB flash drive, grew more than seven-fold from 2016 to 2017, according to a recent study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Use of JUUL by youths in schools, including in classrooms and bathrooms, has been widely reported. JUULs contain nicotine, which can disrupt adolescent brain development, including parts of the brain that control attention, learning, and susceptibility to addiction. The U.S. Surgeon General has concluded that e-cigarette use among youths and young adults is a public health concern, and that e-cigarette aerosol is not harmless.

Like other e-cigarettes, JUUL is a battery-powered device that heats a nicotine-containing liquid to produce an aerosol that is inhaled. JUUL comes in a variety of flavors, including mango and crème brulee, and also uses nicotine salts, which can allow high levels of nicotine to be inhaled more easily and with less irritation. Other manufacturers have recently started making look-alike e-cigarette products.

Representatives from the company that manufactures JUULs are contacting schools to offer youth tobacco prevention curriculum. The U.S. Surgeon General has stated that while anti-smoking programs that are sponsored by tobacco companies may improve the public's perception of the tobacco industry, they have not demonstrated success in impacting young people's tobacco use.

The Indiana State Department of Health's Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Commission has assembled information and free resources available to use in your school, offer to parents, and share with your students. The resources are available at <https://www.in.gov/isdh/tpc/2340.htm>.

Many communities also have a local tobacco control coalition that is a resource. To find your local contact, visit: <https://www.in.gov/isdh/tpc/2350.htm>.

Thank you for your support in helping to protect youth. Together, let's work to make the next generation tobacco free.

Yours in health,

Kristina M. Box, MD, FACOG
State Health Commissioner



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To promote, protect, and
improve the health and safety
of all Hoosiers.