

## **E-CIGARETTES/VAPING, FLAVORED TOBACCO PRODUCTS AND YOUTH HEALTH**

Adopted by the Statewide Annual Meeting Delegates June 2020

- WHEREAS,** E-cigarette/vaping and flavored tobacco use among youth is at epidemic levels among high school and middle school students, and teens across all demographics who use tobacco reported using a flavored product; and
- WHEREAS,** While traditional combustible cigarette use has dropped to its lowest point in recent history, a new generation of youth is becoming addicted to nicotine via e-cigarettes and flavored tobacco products; and
- WHEREAS,** E-cigarette/vaping exposes the user to toxins, metals, carcinogens and other compounds which, when inhaled, can cause debilitating illnesses, severe and irreversible lung injuries, cardiovascular injuries, gastrointestinal injuries, neurobiological insults to adolescents brains, or death; and
- WHEREAS,** Secondhand vaping subjects young people to the same toxins and addictive substances; and
- WHEREAS,** E-cigarette companies are specifically targeting and successfully marketing to children in ways such as product and package design, online influencers, and infiltrating school tobacco control programs; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That California State PTA and its units, councils, and districts seek and support legislation, regulation, and/or other national, state and local measures, to prohibit the use of electronic cigarettes and all flavored tobacco products on school grounds, in public places, and in other places where young people may be exposed to secondhand vaping; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That California State PTA and its units, councils and districts seek and support legislation and regulations to protect the public, especially youth, against the health risks associated with the use of tobacco products by prohibiting the sale, marketing, and distribution of flavored tobacco products and e-cigarettes, including components, accessories, and tobacco product flavor enhancers; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That California State PTA and its units, councils, and districts seek and support legislation, regulation, and/or other national, state and local measures, to require clear package labeling on flavored tobacco products and e-cigarettes, including components and accessories, to indicate the amount and concentration of nicotine, known carcinogens, metals, and all chemicals, including solvents, whether active or inert; and be it further

## **E-Cigarettes/Vaping, Flavored Tobacco Products and Youth Health – continued**

**RESOLVED,** That California State PTA and its units, councils, and districts seek and support legislation, regulation, and/or other national, state, and local measures, to provide, in schools and elsewhere, screening, counseling, intervention, and support, by trained health professionals, for young people who may use or are using products containing nicotine; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That California State PTA and its units, councils, and districts encourage the education of all members of the school and larger community about the ill health effects and addictive nature of nicotine.

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### **BACKGROUND SUMMARY**

For many years, the PTA has actively promoted education about the dangers of tobacco and tobacco products and supported efforts to prevent tobacco use among underage users. Effective anti-smoking campaigns and tobacco-use prevention programs have achieved large reductions in cigarette use by youth over the past fifteen years. Until recently, we were seeing the lowest rates in decades of tobacco product use among young people. But as Suchita Krishnan-Sarin, Ph.D., of the Yale School of Medicine, says in her 2018 TedMed talk, “Vaping is the new smoking.”

Millions of young people are once again becoming addicted to nicotine. Deceptive advertising, and messaging that falsely claims that “vaping is healthier than cigarettes,” have led many young people to believe that vaping is not smoking, that vaping is healthier than cigarettes, and that vaping is cool. Students who know better have provided their own tagline, “They Lied; We Know.”

Current e-cigarette technology, combining freebase nicotine with benzoic acid, reduces the harshness when a person takes their first puff. This makes the initial vaping experience feel less harsh, allowing manufacturers to increase the nicotine concentration in electronic cigarettes from 2% to more than 4%.

Reduced harshness and attractive flavors might make this appear to be a superior product, but for the higher nicotine concentrations, ill health effects and the danger of addicting young people. Nicotine, flavorings, metals, chemicals and known carcinogens are delivered directly to the user’s lungs. And the flavorings are designed to be attractive to young people.

Tobacco companies tell the public not to worry. But nicotine is highly addictive, especially in an adolescent’s developing brain. And when young people become addicted, the support services that could help them are generally unavailable.

Traditional tobacco companies have begun investing in vaping companies and using the tobacco industry’s proven successful marketing strategies such as “youth influencers” to attract and addict young people. In order for the tobacco industry to survive, their business model must pivot and they must develop a replacement pipeline of new users. They have decided to target our kids.

**E-Cigarettes/Vaping, Flavored Tobacco Products and Youth Health – continued**

Vape product manufacturers have been coming into our students' schools to "teach that vaping is safer than smoking." In effect, manufacturers have used the schools' own tobacco prevention programs as part of their marketing campaigns to thrust their products into the hands of unsuspecting teens. Vaping has gone viral on the internet, too. Vape companies have betrayed the trust of schools, parents, and students. They lied. We know.