



April 27, 2018

Dear School Administrators,

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

In 2017, Minnesota high-school tobacco use spiked to 26%; the first increase in 17 years. Much of this increase was due to e-cigarettes, with high-school e-cigarette use increasing by 50% in the last three years; currently 19% of high school students report use. A specific product called JUUL, which looks like a USB or flash drive, now dominates roughly 50% of the e-cigarette market. These products are easily hidden, emit limited odor, and the aerosol dissipates quickly. The JUUL pods, which are often flavored like candy or fruit, contain the same amount of nicotine as a pack of cigarettes.

As outlined in [Minnesota Laws Addressing Tobacco Product Use in Public and Charter Schools \(PDF\)](#), a factsheet from the Public Health Law Center, all tobacco use, including e-cigarette use and vaping, are prohibited by state law in public schools.

In addition, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) issued a [Health Advisory on Nicotine Risks for Children, Teens, and Pregnant Women](#). In particular, nicotine can negatively impact learning, memory, and attention. Nicotine exposure through e-cigarettes also increases the likelihood of future combustible cigarette use, and a lifetime of addiction to tobacco and other substances.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that JUUL representatives are contacting schools to offer a “youth tobacco prevention curriculum” and funding. If your school is approached, we strongly recommend that schools and districts reject these offers. These tobacco industry programs are not evidence-based or effective in preventing youth tobacco use.

MDH assembled a toolkit of information, resources, and free curricula to use in your school, offer to parents, and share with your students. The toolkit is available at www.health.mn.gov/ecigarettes and provides free tools to download.

We thank you for your cooperation in helping to protect youth and keep the next generation safe from the harms of tobacco.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jan K. Malcolm'.

Jan K. Malcolm
Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Health

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brenda Cassellius'.

Brenda Cassellius
Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Education