
TRUTH INITIATIVE AND KAISER PERMANENTE, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION, JOIN FORCES WITH EVERFI TO GIVE AMERICA'S YOUTH THE FACTS ABOUT VAPING

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Dec. 10, 2020) – In an effort to educate America's youth about the health dangers of e-cigarette usage and reverse the pervasive vaping epidemic, Truth Initiative and Kaiser Permanente, in collaboration with the American Heart Association, have launched a national youth vaping prevention curriculum called ***Vaping: Know the truth***. The digital course developed as part of Truth Initiative's nationally recognized youth anti-vaping **truth** campaign includes resources for students who vape to quit through its *This is Quitting* text message program. The curriculum will be made available to schools by leading social impact education innovator, EVERFI.

Kaiser Permanente is furthering its efforts to educate youth about the dangers of vaping by funding the development of the ***Vaping: Know the truth*** curriculum and making it widely available to schools—teachers, students, administrators, parents and the public at large -for free—as part of its [Thriving Schools](#) initiative. For its part, the American Heart Association will be promoting the availability of the course as part of its Tobacco-Free Toolkit which includes a model school policy and recommendations for school-based prevention curriculum and youth cessation programs.

Declared an epidemic by the U.S. Surgeon General in December 2018, teen e-cigarette use continues at record levels during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- According to the latest CDC¹ data, nearly 20 percent of high school students (approximately 3 million) and 4.7 percent of middle schoolers (approximately 550,000) use e-cigarettes. Nearly 40 percent of high school students who vape do so regularly with 22.5% using e-cigarettes daily – an indicator of possible nicotine addiction. As a result, youth tobacco use is at its highest rate in nearly 20 years.
- This reverses years of progress in youth tobacco prevention given that young people who ever vaped have 7x the odds of starting to use deadly cigarettes according to [Truth Initiative's latest study](#).
- In addition, youth exposure to nicotine is particularly dangerous since it has been shown to harm brain development, alter nerve cell functioning and make adolescent brains more susceptible to other addictive drugs.
- Youth vaping is especially worrisome following the 2019 outbreak of vaping-associated lung disease (EVALI) and now during the COVID-19 pandemic with [new evidence from Stanford University](#) showing that youth who vape are up to 5 times more likely to test positive for COVID-19.

The *Vaping: Know the truth* digital vaping prevention **truth** course offers a modern approach to guide teachers and educate America's youth about the dangers associated with e-cigarette use and vaping. Students will learn how e-cigarette marketers intentionally target young consumers and how using these products can be detrimental to their health. Students will also learn and practice critical refusal skills and get



connected to support services available for teens who already vape and want to quit by linking to Truth Initiative's *This is Quitting*, which is already helping over 220,000 youth and young adults to stop using e-cigarettes.

"Today's teenagers are smart and discerning," said Robin Koval, Truth Initiative CEO and president. "Giving direct access to the facts about vaping and providing resources to quit designed specifically for them empowers young people to make positive choices when it comes to vaping and their health. This is especially urgent amidst new research that links youth vaping with an increased risk of testing positive for COVID-19. This curriculum is a continuation of our national **truth** campaign to support young people in taking a stand against e-cigarettes and the tobacco industry, which aggressively seeks to recruit a new generation of tobacco users. We're grateful for our partners who are helping us reach more students, parents, and educators with *Vaping: Know the truth* in a joint effort to end the pervasive youth vaping epidemic."

Vaping: Know the truth is a 40-45 minute self-administered interactive course with peer-to-peer, digital instruction geared to high school students and available to teachers of other grade levels. The course curriculum is comprised of four learning modules: the "Know," which introduces students to the topic of vaping; the "Uncover," which provides hard facts around marketing efforts from Big Tobacco; the "Overcome," which explores the dangers of nicotine addiction; and the "Change," which delves into the benefits of living a vape-free life.

"Kaiser Permanente is committed to creating a generation that is free from nicotine addiction, and a critical part of that is empowering teens to quit vaping or never start in the first place," said Bechara Choucair, MD, SVP and chief health officer for Kaiser Permanente. "Additionally, given the emerging connections between tobacco-related lung damage and susceptibility to COVID-19, this essential curriculum couldn't come at a better time."

Through real-world scenarios, the course speaks directly to four key youth personas - those who currently use e-cigarette products; those who are occasional or experimental users; those who do not currently use e-cigarette products; and those who may have a friend who currently uses them - providing facts and evidence in a peer-to-peer voice. Throughout the course, students will learn about the risks of vaping nicotine and the dangers of addiction to help empower them to make healthier, more informed choices.

"Over 3.6 million young people are actively using e-cigarettes, with an increased use of menthol and disposables products," said Nancy Brown, chief executive officer of the American Heart Association. "Together with Truth Initiative and Kaiser Permanente, we are providing students with resources and solutions to combat this epidemic and help protect our youth's health."



Educators will be able to measure the program's success through in-depth data and impact analysis, including data on student activation and demographics. The course will also track learners through their experience measuring their knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs through embedded assessments and surveys.

“With nearly 20% of high school students vaping, educating our youth about its danger to their health is critical,” said Jon Chapman, president and co-founder of EVERFI. “We commend the work Truth Initiative has put in over the years to address this critical issue and we are pleased to be working together to offer this critical anti-vaping curriculum. An anti-vaping program has consistently been one of the most requested health content curriculums from educators and we are delighted with the outcome of this program.”

About Truth Initiative

Truth Initiative is a national public health organization dedicated to a future where tobacco and nicotine addiction are things of the past. We are inspiring lives free from smoking, vaping and nicotine through our rigorous scientific research and policy studies, our proven-effective and nationally-recognized **truth**® youth public education campaign, our community and youth engagement programs supporting populations at high risk of using tobacco products, and our innovations to end nicotine addiction by helping people quit. Our 20 years of lifesaving work has helped drive down the youth smoking rate from 23% in 2000 to a historic low of 3.7% in 2019 by preventing millions of young people from becoming smokers. We are equally committed to achieving the same results in ending the youth e-cigarette epidemic. Formerly known as the American Legacy Foundation, Truth Initiative was established and funded through the landmark 1998 Master Settlement Agreement, the largest civil litigation settlement in U.S. history, which resulted in tobacco companies paying states and territories compensation for tobacco-related diseases and losses to local economies. Truth Initiative is also contributing to ending the opioid misuse epidemic by sharing our expertise in youth and young adult education and prevention. To learn more, visit truthinitiative.org.

About Kaiser Permanente

For 75 years, Kaiser Permanente has been committed to shaping the future of health and health care — and helping our members, patients, and communities experience more healthy years. We are recognized as one of America's leading health care providers and not-for-profit health plans. Since July 21, 1945, Kaiser Permanente's mission has been to provide high-quality, affordable health care services and to improve the health of our members and the communities we serve. We currently serve 12.4 million members in eight states and the District of Columbia. Care for members and patients is focused on their total health and guided by their personal Permanente Medical Group physicians, specialists and team of caregivers. Our expert and caring medical teams are empowered and supported by industry-leading technology advances and tools for health promotion, disease prevention, state-of-the-art care delivery and world-class chronic disease management. Kaiser Permanente is dedicated to care innovations, clinical research, health education and the support of community health.



About EVERFI

EVERFI is an international technology company driving social change through education to address the most challenging issues affecting society ranging from financial wellness to prescription drug safety to workplace conduct and other critical topics. Founded in 2008, EVERFI is fueled by its Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) community engagement platform and has reached more than 41 million learners globally. In 2020, the company was recognized as one of the World's Most Innovative Companies by Fast Company and was featured on Fortune Magazine's Impact 20 list. Some of America's leading CEOs and venture capital firms are EVERFI investors including Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos, Google Chairman Eric Schmidt, Twitter founder Evan Williams, as well as Advance, Rethink Education, Rethink Impact, The Rise Fund, and TPG Growth. To learn more about EVERFI and how you can #answerthecall please visit everfi.com or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, or Twitter @EVERFI.

¹ CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report; Sept 9, 2020

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