



# CREATING A FUTURE FREE FROM SMOKING, VAPING AND NICOTINE

EXTRAORDINARY ACHIEVEMENTS IN A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

**2020 ANNUAL REPORT**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**03**

LETTER FROM THE CEO & PRESIDENT

**05**

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT PUBLIC EDUCATION

**13**

RESEARCH & POLICY

**21**

COMMUNITY & YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

**28**

INNOVATIONS TO QUIT SMOKING, VAPING, AND NICOTINE

**34**

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

# LETTER FROM CEO & PRESIDENT ROBIN KOVAL



2020 was a year like no other. In the face of a global pandemic and unimaginable challenges, Truth Initiative remained laser-focused on its ultimate goal: saving lives. We intensified our efforts to combat tobacco use as both a public health and social justice issue. We rapidly responded to national crises by providing our young audience with information to stay safe, healthy and to help their communities, while working tirelessly to create a future that has never been more urgent: one where tobacco and nicotine addiction are things of the past. As youth e-cigarette use persists at epidemic levels and threatens to addict a new generation to nicotine, we continue to lead the fight against tobacco use in all forms and launched an update to our organization's mission: **achieve a culture where young people reject smoking, vaping, and nicotine** to better reflect our work and progress.

Recognizing the **truth** campaign's high awareness and cultural relevancy among youth and young adults, **we expanded the truth brand to serve as a**

**powerful, comprehensive umbrella for all our youth-facing national programs** which have expanded beyond prevention to include, cessation, education and activism initiatives. In 2020, we launched six **truth** campaign efforts with record engagement, including our first campaigns to fully integrate This is Quitting, our first-of-its-kind, free and anonymous text message quit vaping program tailored to young people. With more than 300,000 young people enrolled and strong results from our randomized clinical trial — the first-ever for a quit vaping intervention — This is Quitting is making a big impact. We brought the power of **truth** and This is Quitting to classrooms and communities with **Vaping: Know the truth**, our first national youth vaping prevention curriculum that nearly 55,000 students have already completed in just its first five months. Our **truth** activist programs continued in full force in a virtual format, including our *Moment of Truth* event which brought hundreds of young people together virtually to speak out against the destructive effects tobacco and vaping companies have had on public health

and the environment and their predatory marketing practices that have disproportionately impacted Black Americans and communities of color.

Our work to inspire lives free from smoking, vaping, and nicotine is always backed by science. Researchers in our Truth Initiative Schroeder Institute broke important new ground in 2020 with 50 peer-reviewed journal articles, 21 Truth Initiative reports and resources, and 15 comment submissions to federal agencies to build the science, inform policy and drive the narrative in the news. Our contributions to the evidence base on e-cigarettes continued to fill critical gaps, including research that found young people surveyed who had ever used e-cigarettes have **seven times** higher odds of becoming smokers one year later compared with those who have never vaped, and that youth and young adults surveyed with high exposure to popular streaming and TV shows containing tobacco images are **three times** more likely to start vaping compared to their peers with no exposure. Not only did a syndicated story in USA Today secure more than 131 million impressions; the report prompted a bipartisan coalition of 43 attorneys general to include our findings in a letter to the five creative guilds, encouraging their members to reduce harmful tobacco depictions on the small screen.


We also continued to expose Big Tobacco's efforts to falsely position itself as part of the public health solution to end smoking, as it recruits a new generation of tobacco users with electronic and flavored products. Our white paper, ***Spinning a New Tobacco Industry: How Big Tobacco is trying to sell a do-gooder image and what Americans think about it*** showed that over 70% of adult Americans surveyed strongly distrust the tobacco industry and, our report,

***Seeing Through Big Tobacco's Spin***, showed 92% of young people believe that vaping companies lie about the harmful effects of their products

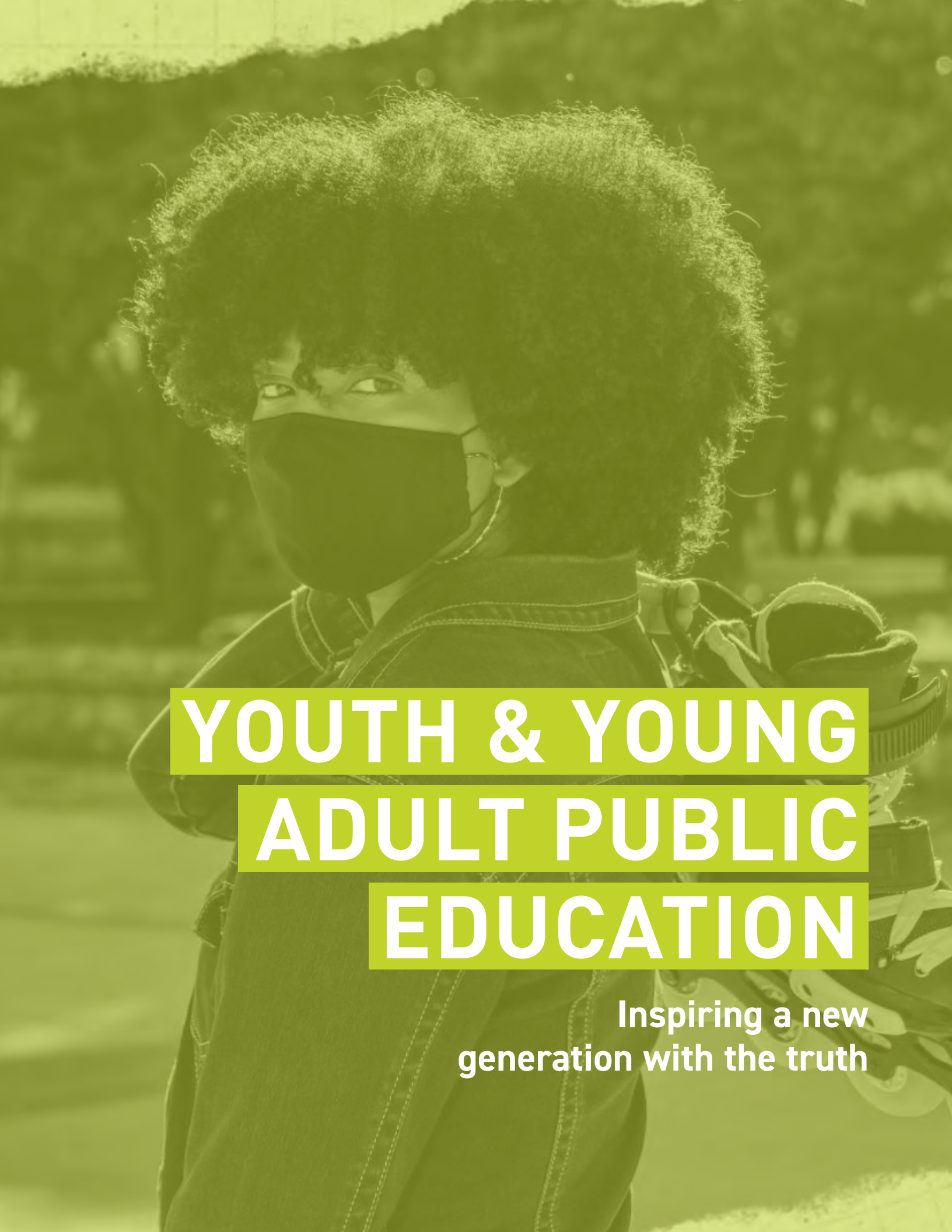
Rigorous evaluation of our work to ensure maximum impact remains a central part of our research efforts. In 2020, we reported the successful results of our ***The Truth About Opioids*** campaign. Our multi-year effort to combat America's opioid misuse epidemic among youth and young adults found that exposure to campaign messages was associated with significant shifts in young people's knowledge and attitudes about opioid misuse and opioid use stigma.

These highlights represent only a sample of what we accomplished to advance our mission in 2020. Throughout this report, you will find more detail about our achievements across youth and young adult public education, scientific research and policy studies, community and youth engagement programs supporting vulnerable populations, and innovations to end nicotine addiction by helping people quit.

These **extraordinary achievements in a year like no other** are bringing us closer to a creating a future where tobacco and nicotine addiction are things of the past for everyone. We closed 2020 with many successes, a strong financial position, and a sustained commitment to our most valuable asset: our people. This progress, after all, would not have been possible without the dedication of our talented staff, committed Board of Directors and vital partners. We look forward to continuing our work together to do what we do best: save lives.



**Robin Koval, CEO and President**



**YOUTH & YOUNG  
ADULT PUBLIC  
EDUCATION**

Inspiring a new  
generation with the truth



**Young people know and trust the truth brand, which has 80% awareness among the target audience.**

As youth vaping persisted at epidemic levels in 2020 — about one in five high school students were vaping; nearly 40% of those almost daily — our award-winning **truth** youth and young adult prevention and education campaign empowered young people with the facts to make informed decisions about smoking, vaping, and nicotine use and influence their peers to do the same. Our multi-platform campaigns exposed the truth about these products and the companies behind them and helped enroll more than 300,000 young people in This is Quitting, our first-of-its kind quit vaping text message program.

In 2020, we launched six **truth** campaign efforts, ranging from our first-ever national campaign to promote This is Quitting to efforts focused specifically on COVID-19 to help young people understand the risks of vaping during a pandemic. Our work in 2020 also continued our longstanding fight to expose tobacco as a social justice issue and racism as a public health crisis and encouraged young people to do their part to help their communities during an unprecedented year.

*The Truth About Opioids*, our ongoing effort to contribute youth prevention and education expertise to combatting America's opioid misuse epidemic, hit a major milestone in 2020 with rigorous research showing its effectiveness (detailed on page 19). The Emmy-winning campaign is helping young people understand the facts about opioids, the risk of addiction and the crucial role they can play in reducing stigma and solving the crisis within their communities, and we continue to share this work with leaders in the field to underscore the importance of youth prevention and engagement in the comprehensive effort to end this crisis.



## TRUTH + THIS IS QUITTING: INSPIRING VAPE-FREE LIVES

With the youth vaping epidemic continuing in 2020, we were on the frontlines of this nicotine addiction crisis to help young people get the information, support and tools to quit vaping or never start in the first place.

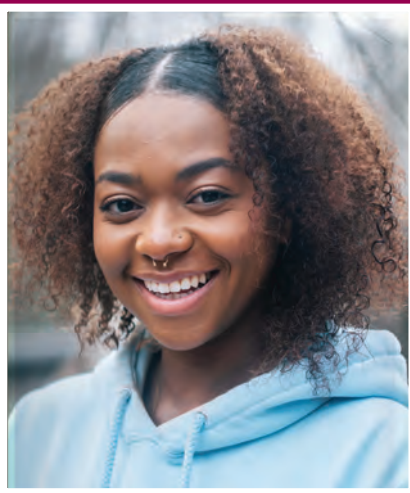
Our first **truth** campaign to fully integrate This is Quitting, a free and anonymous text message quit vaping program tailored to young people, “Ready to Ditch JUUL” amplified a growing movement among young people to quit vaping. As young people started sharing on social media that they hated experiencing addiction and were destroying their devices, **truth** introduced an integrated messaging program featuring young people ditching their vaping products in creative ways. For example, in a partnership with TikTok, social media influencers challenged young people to creatively “ditch their JUUL” and share their video with others. It resonated: The campaign’s hashtag **#ThisisQuitting received more the 13 billion views on TikTok.**



Continuing the cultural momentum, **truth** launched *Quit Together*, with the objective of normalizing quitting behavior and providing inspiration, a sense of community and real tools to help. We partnered with social media influencers and e-cigarette users **Victoria Annunziato** (aka King Victober), **Tosha** and **Jerry Purpdrank** who invited young people—including their combined **11.3 million followers**—to join them and “quit together” using This is Quitting. In just the first few weeks of the campaign, daily enrollment in This is Quitting nearly tripled and now has over 300,000 youth and young adults enrolled in this proven-effective text to quit program. And **after six weeks, all three influencers reported that they were successfully living vape-free lives.**

*Quit Together* builds on insights about what young people say they need to help them quit. Truth Initiative data revealed that **60% of the young e-cigarette users surveyed want to quit within the year**. Of those who want to quit vaping, having a support system on social media (43.6%), following along with a group of social influencers who were quitting (41.7%) and watching an influencer quit vaping themselves (40.8%) were all cited as things that would help. In a powerful continuation of the campaign, we launched a series on YouTube and Instagram called “Quitters” that highlights real people using This is Quitting on their journey to stop vaping for good.

The success of *Quit Together* captured the attention of *Good Morning America* resulting in a feature segment on how **truth** is inspiring young people to quit by providing the much-needed free resources and support to normalize quitting especially on social media.



**60% of the young e-cigarette users surveyed want to quit within the year**





## STAYING SAFE AND HEALTHY IN 2020

Because young people know and trust **truth**, we knew it was important to do our part in 2020 to help young people stay healthy for themselves and their communities.

As orders to stay home spread across the country, we used our **truth** platform to engage young people to practice social distancing with the #WerkItFromHome challenge on TikTok. This effort urged young people to stay safe at home and connect socially, while strutting to RuPaul's famous tune "Supermodel" in their coziest, strangest and most inventive quarantine ensembles in a giant runway show that received **more than 6.5 billion views**.

We also responded to the pandemic with the campaign "Vaping vs. Immune Systems with Dr. Rutland," which educated young people on the risks of COVID-19 and vaping and inspired them to boost their immune systems and skip the vape. Debuting at the MTV Video Music Awards, the campaign garnered 45 million views in just the first 24 hours.

For all of our work supporting young people during COVID-19, we were recognized as a finalist in the Apps category for Fast Company's 2021 World Changing Ideas Awards. This honor goes to projects that are playing an important role in building a better world — especially now as we emerge from the coronavirus crisis.



**45 million views in just the first 24 hours**



### GETTING OUT THE VOTE

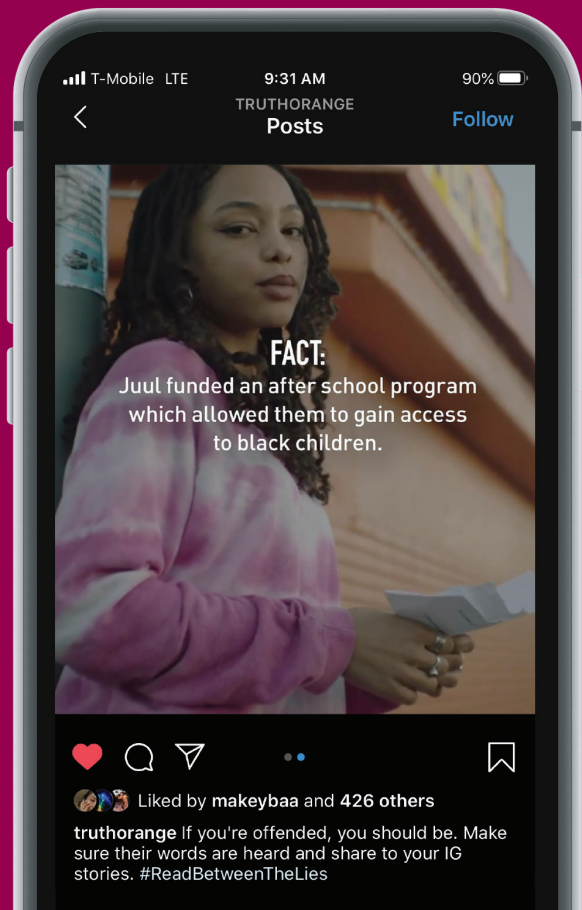
We also used our clout with our young audience to encourage voter participation in 2020. Through a partnership with TurboVote, we created a custom co-branded online resource where our followers could register to vote and access more information about the election. The effort — "You're Registered, Right?" — rolled out on **truth** social channels just in time for National Voter Registration Day on September 22.



## READ BETWEEN THE LIES

During a year in which tragic events, especially the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and other victims of police violence, sparked a national reckoning around racism and social justice, Truth Initiative continued its longstanding fight to expose tobacco as a social justice issue and racism as a public health crisis. Led and promoted by Black voices, *Read Between the Lies* featured videos of people reading and reacting to actual quotes from tobacco industry executives revealing the deliberate and exploitive ways they target the Black community. Running across broadcast, digital and social networks, *Read Between the Lies* called out the industries aggressive, decades-long tactics of targeting its deadly products to Black communities.

The videos were directed by young black filmmaker [Rodney Lucas](#), known for creating meaningful and inspiring videos through the lens of Black voices. The campaign also invited viewers to go [online](#) to learn more about health disparities in the Black community, Big Tobacco's history of targeting Black Americans and learn about ways to take action and support Black creators.



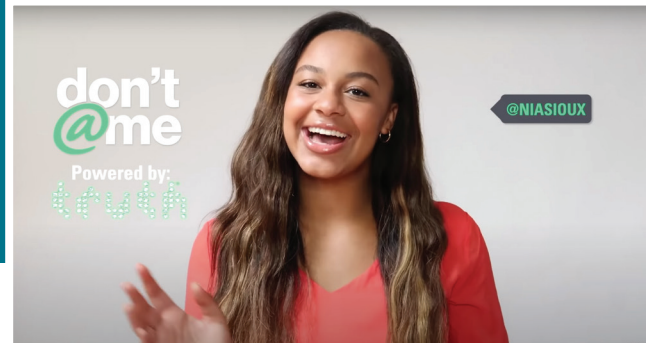
## PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

Strategic partnerships are an important part of our work to influence culture. In 2020, we produced original content and merchandise with leading and innovative youth-focused brands and creators that helped spread the facts about smoking, vaping and nicotine.



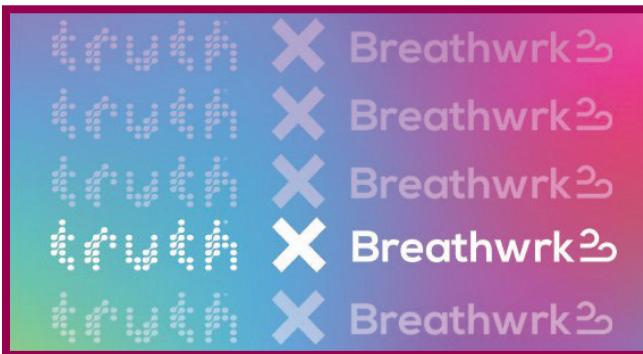
### Comedy Central

With The Daily Show correspondent and comedian Roy Wood, Jr., **truth** and Comedy Central launched co-branded content — **“How Big Tobacco Turns a Pandemic Into Profit”** — that exposed Big Tobacco's tactics to cash in on the pandemic by selling face masks in vape shops and sending free ventilators to hospitals.



### MTV

A partnership with MTV and dancer/singer/actress Nia Sioux produced a special episode of the MTV series **“Don't @ Me with Nia Sioux,”** where Nia gave her take on a lot of hotly debated topics on the internet and laid down some facts about vaping.



### Breathwrk

A collaboration with the Breathwrk app, TIQ+Breathwrk, offers a free truth-branded daily breathing exercise that can help young people fight cravings and anxiety as they quit vaping.



### Teenager Therapy

We collaborated with the highly popular Teenager Therapy podcast to cover all things vaping: peer pressure, anxiety, cravings, and what it's really like to quit including an interview with Victoria Annunziato (aka King Vicober) who talked about her quitting journey with This is Quitting and **truth**.

## TRUTH MERCHANDISE

Collaborations with brands and creators helped spread **truth** in style. We partnered with Sub\_Urban Riot, a global clothing brand known for its statement streetwear, to bring two unique t-shirt designs to the [truth merch shop](#) to support This is Quitting. We also collaborated with visual artist Victoria Cassinova on a custom art series, ANTI, to call out the harmful marketing tactics used by Big Tobacco to exploit Black communities for profit. The series, titled ANTI, features powerful depictions of Black resilience in the face of adversity and oppression.



### MERCH FOR MASKS

In true **truth** fashion, we helped young people around the country use their time and creativity to make a difference. With many people making masks at home and donating them to help slow the spread of COVID-19, we saw an opportunity for our surplus **truth** merchandise from the canceled tour season. Using social media, **truth** offered to send anyone making face masks five pieces of unused merch to use as extra fabric free of charge. Within 24 hours of launching the Merch for Masks Campaign in late April, more than 3,500 people signed up — the most response we've ever had to a social giveaway.

We know our efforts are making a difference. Results from our youth vaping prevention campaigns show that young people who are aware of the **truth** campaign are significantly more knowledgeable about vaping risks, have more anti-industry sentiments and find vaping less appealing and socially acceptable. While we still have much work ahead, **truth** — a brand that young people know and trust with 80% awareness among its target audience — is making progress toward our organizational mission of achieving a culture where young people reject smoking, vaping and nicotine.



The background of the image is a collage of US dollar bills and rolled-up documents. The bills are partially visible, showing details like the portrait of Benjamin Franklin, the words 'SERVE NOTE', and the number '215 J'. The rolled-up documents are white with dark bands, suggesting they contain important papers or research. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

# RESEARCH & POLICY

Ground-breaking research,  
grounded in science



# 21

**Reports released**

# 50

**Peer-reviewed articles published**

Truth Initiative Schroeder Institute provides in-depth studies and policy analyses that help to advance tobacco-related science, impact policy and drive the narrative in the news. In 2020, we published 50 peer-reviewed articles in high-impact academic journals – such as *American Journal of Public Health*, *Preventive Medicine*, and *Tobacco Control*, among many more – released 21 Truth Initiative reports, published 50 peer-reviewed articles, and submitted 15 comments to federal agencies. This work – covered in major media outlets including *USA Today*, *The New York Times*, *TODAY*, and *Wall Street Journal*, just to name a few – made us sought-after thought leaders, helping inform policymakers, media, public health advocates and the public at large.

In 2020, we continued to play a pivotal role in filling knowledge gaps about e-cigarettes and the youth vaping epidemic by breaking new ground in important areas of study, including documenting tobacco in popular culture and working with partners to help eliminate flavored tobacco products. We're also exposing the interference of the tobacco industry in scientific and remain focused on harm reduction strategies based on unbiased science, not industry spin. In addition, our ongoing, rigorous evaluation of all our programs ensures continuous optimization and maximum impact to make tobacco use and nicotine addiction a thing of the past.

## THE DATA TO COMBAT YOUTH VAPING

During this past year, our studies continue to provide essential data to help address the youth vaping epidemic, including:

- Young people who had ever used e-cigarettes had **seven times** higher odds of becoming smokers one year later compared with those who had never vaped.<sup>1</sup>
- Research with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and CDC Foundation, which was included in the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report Series, exposed alarming trends stemming from weak policy. Disposable and menthol-flavored e-cigarettes — **two product types exempted from partial federal restrictions** — rapidly gained nearly three-quarters of the e-cigarette market as young people switched products.<sup>2</sup>
- Sales of **menthol e-cigarettes increased by almost \$60 million and its market share more than doubled** after it were exempted from the federal restrictions that removed only some flavored e-cigarettes from the market.<sup>3</sup>
- Though leading e-cigarette JUUL claims its target customers are adult smokers, **only 3% of adult smokers who attempted to quit in the past year used JUUL** as a quit method.<sup>4</sup>
- An analysis of reactions to the 2019 outbreak of e-cigarette/vaping associated lung injury (EVALI) revealed that awareness of the health risks of vaping can support efforts to prevent e-cigarette use and encourage young people to quit. Young e-cigarette users who perceived risk of lung injury from vaping during the EVALI outbreak had **twice the odds of intending to quit vaping** compared to those with lower risk perceptions.<sup>5</sup>

# 7x

**higher odds of becoming smokers one year later among young people who ever used e-cigarettes**

# 3%

**of adults smokers who attempted to quit in the past year used JUUL**

**Awareness of the health risks of vaping can support efforts to prevent youth e-cigarette use and encourage young people to quit.**

<sup>1</sup> Truth Initiative. 2020. Young people who vape are much more likely to become smokers, new research confirms.

<sup>2</sup> Truth Initiative. 2020. New federal data: Flavored e-cigarettes continue to drive youth vaping epidemic, with disposable use up 1,000% among high schoolers.

<sup>3</sup> Truth Initiative. 2020. Weak restrictions on flavored e-cigarettes lead to explosive menthol sales.

<sup>4</sup> Truth Initiative. 2020. Weak restrictions on flavored e-cigarettes lead to explosive menthol sales.

<sup>5</sup> Truth Initiative. 2020. New study: Only 3% of adult smokers used JUUL to quit in past year.

We sounded the alarm about dramatic shifts in the e-cigarette market that underscore the urgent need for comprehensive tobacco product regulation, particularly with respect to e-cigarette flavors and devices. Our report “Dangerous loopholes: Young e-cigarette users report swapping products as vaping policies change” showed how, without a comprehensive flavored e-cigarette policy, young users can continue switching from one flavored, nicotine-containing product to another in response to policy changes.

## INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN TOBACCO USE AND COVID-19

In response to COVID-19, Truth Initiative conducted rapid original studies on emerging issues related to tobacco use and the pandemic, including:

- “Tobacco Nation in the age of COVID-19,” which analyzed the unique set of challenges that make rural communities vulnerable to poorer health outcomes related to COVID-19, found that areas of the country with high rates of smoking—a risk factor for COVID-19 infection and for developing severe outcomes—are **also among those with the lowest hospital capacities.**
- A Truth Initiative survey of 1,457 people between 15 and 24 years old in April 2020 found that, of the 364 people who identified as current vapers, **nearly two-thirds — 62% —** say they are more interested in quitting vaping now compared to before the coronavirus pandemic.
- A study published in *American Journal of Public Health* found that people between the ages of 15-20 had up to **35% lower odds** of being a current e-cigarette user during the pandemic, underscoring critical issues about youth access to e-cigarettes in the retail environment and other settings impacted by pandemic restrictions.

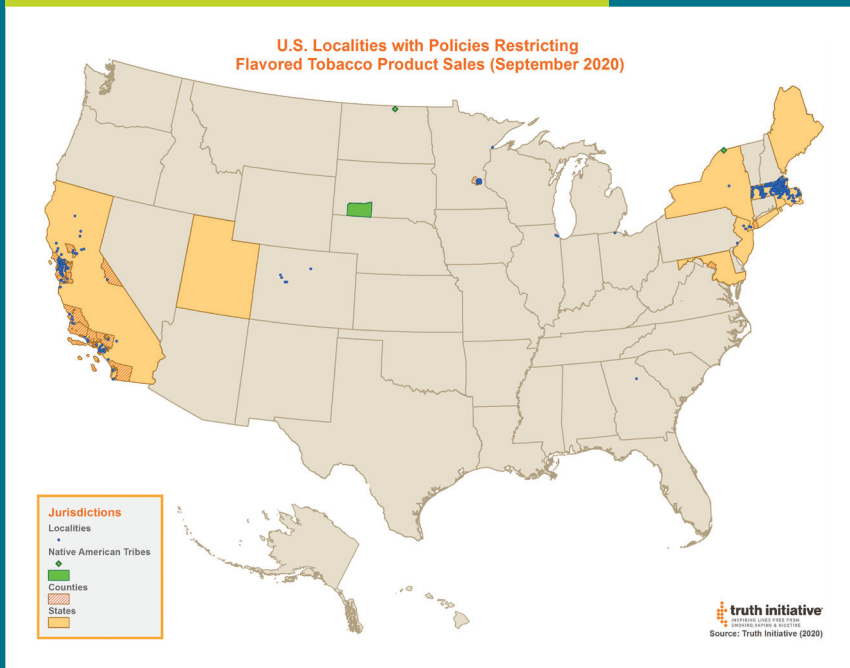


## INFORMING THE E-CIGARETTE REVIEW PROCESS

As e-cigarette manufacturers faced a September 2020 deadline to submit their product applications to the FDA for review in order to remain on the market, we continued to be a strong voice on the process through our policy analysis and official comments to the agency. We continued to stress the need for manufacturers to provide sufficient information about current youth use of the product and the likelihood of future youth use, as well as strongly urging transparency to the public of the process. With a group of leading tobacco control experts, we also published a commentary in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* that called on the FDA to require tobacco companies to submit research showing the impact on youth and young adults before authorizing the marketing of any new tobacco product, including e-cigarettes. We also strongly urged the FDA to eliminate any claim that states or implies a tobacco product is less harmful than any other tobacco product without rigorous scientific evidence.



## MAPPING FLAVOR POLICIES

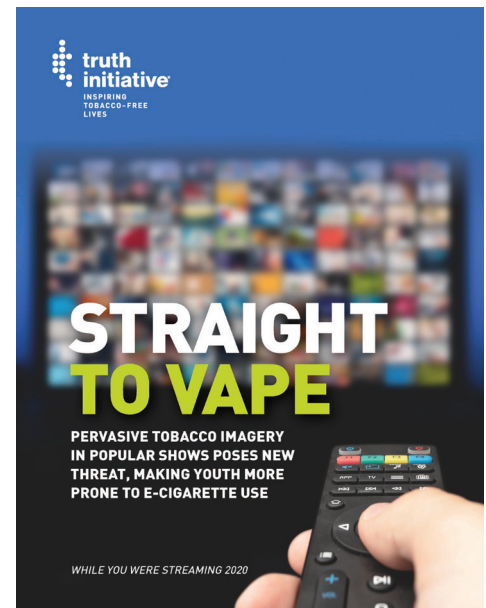


In the absence of federal action to remove all flavored tobacco products and provide comprehensive regulation, many states and localities across the country have enacted their own policies. As our research and policy work continues to stress the need for comprehensive action, we monitor and analyze these local policies with our flavor policy map and other resources to help support partners working on these issues.

## TOBACCO IN POP CULTURE

In our third annual “While You Were Streaming report: Straight to Vape,” we published the first research study to examine the link between smoking imagery on episodic TV programming and youth vaping initiation. Our 2020 report highlighted that youth and young adults surveyed with high exposure to popular streaming and TV shows containing tobacco images are **three times** more likely to start vaping compared to their peers with no exposure. These alarming findings came as our annual analysis showed young people’s favorite shows continue to prominently feature tobacco, and as the popularity of streaming grew even more rapidly amid the COVID-19 pandemic with many young people spending more time at home.

The report was covered in a *USA Today* story that was syndicated nationwide, securing more than 131 million impressions. It was also featured in a letter from a bipartisan coalition of 43 attorneys general to the content producers like Netflix requesting they reduce tobacco imagery given the significant audiences of youth and young adults.



## COUNTERING TOBACCO INDUSTRY INFLUENCE



As the tobacco industry continues its ongoing public relations effort in an attempt to reform their image and position themselves as contributors to public health, Truth Initiative continues to monitor and expose these activities and assess their impact on public opinion. Faced with dramatic declines in smoking, the tobacco industry has been aggressively marketing tech-savvy new electronic and flavored products to grow its market among youth and young adults while employing large-scale initiatives to help shift public opinion of the industry. However, our latest report showed that these efforts to overhaul its reputation as it recruits a new generation of tobacco users are failing.

In our report, “Seeing through Big Tobacco’s Spin,” survey findings indicate that youth and young adults overwhelmingly believe that tobacco and vaping companies lie about the harm of their products, spread faulty research, attract kids with flavored products, and agree that the industry should be further regulated. This distrust was reported even among a large majority of tobacco users. While young people overwhelmingly see through Big Tobacco, they are now using tobacco products at rates not observed in years, revealing how powerful, persuasive and addictive the industry and its products are.

With our work to expose industry influence, we are a leading voice in calling out Big Tobacco’s attempts to position itself as part of the public health solution to end smoking, despite continuing to sell cigarettes, the known risks of nicotine addiction to youth, and lacking and promoting new products like e-cigarettes and heated tobacco devices without scientific evidence of the health effects of these products.



### EXAMINING THE LAUNCH OF IQOS

IQOS, the latest product from tobacco giant Philip Morris International, is part of the larger tobacco industry strategy to overhaul its reputation with novel products and electronic devices. In our report, “IQOS in the U.S.: Examining the launch of the country’s newest electronic tobacco product,” we described the various contexts for IQOS marketing, including visiting the first U.S. stores selling the product, and analyzed data on who might be using IQOS. The report provided a first look at potential implications of the product launch and found a carefully executed plan to present IQOS as the future of tobacco, complete with luxury stores, ads in high-end magazines, and a billion-dollar investment in “smoke-free” products — all designed to grow the market for nicotine delivery with both new and current tobacco users.



## MEASURING OUR IMPACT: THE TRUTH ABOUT OPIOIDS

*The Truth About Opioids*, our multi-year effort to contribute our youth prevention and education expertise to combatting America's opioid misuse epidemic, is focused on helping young people understand the facts about opioids, the risk of addiction and the crucial role they can play in reducing stigma and solving the crisis within their communities. In 2020, we produced a thorough report detailing the development and evaluation of the campaign that found exposure to the messages was associated with shifts in young people's knowledge and attitudes about opioid misuse and opioid use stigma. These findings underscore the importance of public education and community engagement coupled with emergency response, treatment and recovery to combat the epidemic.

Using our evidence-based tobacco prevention strategy — giving young people the facts and empowering them to make their own decisions — *The Truth About Opioids* is based on formative research and rigorous evaluation. Studies found a significant knowledge gap about prescription opioids and their risks as well as a significant misunderstanding of opioid use disorder. By harnessing this generation's interest in collective action, the campaign focused on: increasing awareness of the risk of misuse, decreasing stigma of addiction to help young people understand it can happen to them, and prompting them to seek and share opioid-related information. The pre- and post-market evaluations of different components of the campaign found it to be effective in achieving the following outcomes among its target audience:

- **Increasing opioid misuse awareness:** After viewing the ads, nearly three-quarters (73.7%) of youth and young adults perceived using opioids without a prescription even once or twice as “high risk,” an increase from 66%.



- **Decreasing stigma:** There was a 36% increase in those who strongly agreed that anyone can become addicted to prescription opioids and a 20.6% increase in the number of young people who said someone like them could become dependent on prescription opioids.
- **Prompting intentions to seek and share information:** Young people were 600% more likely to search for the terms “opioid epidemic” and the campaign tagline, “know the truth” after seeing the campaign. There was a 20.4% increase in those who reported intending to talk to a friend or loved one about their opioid use and an 11.5% increase in those who intended to look up information about the opioid epidemic.

While the opioid crisis requires a multifaceted approach to stem the tide of addiction and death, public education campaigns like *The Truth About Opioids* demonstrate that changing attitudes is possible, scalable, and vital. Truth Initiative's experience in adapting its two decades of public health campaign experience provides a model for quickly and effectively responding to urgent public health crises.



## 2020 HIGHLIGHTS: A SELECTION OF PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Truth Initiative focused on some of the most important topics in tobacco control with the publication of 50 peer-reviewed research articles in the last year, including:

“Electronic cigarette and JUUL use among adolescents and young adults” *JAMA Network*

“E-cigarette Unit Sales, by Product and Flavor Type — United States, 2014–2020” *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*

“Menthol e-cigarette sales rise following 2020 FDA guidance” *Tobacco Control*

“Association between e-cigarette use and future combustible cigarette use: evidence from a prospective cohort of youth and young adults, 2017-2019” *Addictive Behaviors*

“Perceptions of Use Patterns and Health Consequences Associated with Mentholated Cigarettes Among U.S. Adults” *Health Education & Behavior*

“Boosting Health Campaign Reach and Engagement Through Use of Social Media Influencers and Memes” *Social Media + Society*

“#toolittletoolate: JUUL-related content on Instagram before and after self-regulatory action” *PLoS one*

“Countering tobacco industry tactics on the economic costs of restricting menthol tobacco” *Tobacco Control*

“Sociodemographic Disparities in the Tobacco Retail Environment in Washington, DC: A Spatial Perspective” *Ethnicity & Disease*

“The Importance of Including Youth Research in Premarket Tobacco Product and Modified Risk Tobacco Product Applications to the Food and Drug Administration” *Journal of Adolescent Health*

“E-cigarette Tobacco Retail Licensing Laws: Variance Across US States as of January 1, 2020” *American Journal of Public Health*

“Exposure to tobacco content in episodic programs and tobacco and E-cigarette initiation” *Preventive Medicine*

“Smoking cessation among US adults: use of e-cigarettes, including JUUL, and NRT use” *Tobacco Control*

“Public Support for E-Cigarette-related Policies among a Nationally Representative Sample of US Adults” *Tobacco Use Insights*

“National Support for a Menthol Cigarette Sales Ban” *Public Health Reports*

“Visual Attention to the Use of #ad versus #sponsored on e-Cigarette Influencer Posts on Social Media: A Randomized Experiment” *Journal of Health Communication*

**TOBACCO USE  
KILLS 1,300 AMERICANS  
EACH DAY.**

**#NOTHAPPYORHEALTHY**

**COMMUNITY  
& YOUTH  
ENGAGEMENT**

Online, on the ground, and  
on campuses nationwide



**1.3M**  
young people enlisted  
to date, inspire lives  
free from smoking,  
vaping and nicotine

With the halt of in-person gatherings in 2020, our Community and Youth Engagement programs continued to thrive by shifting to a robust digital engagement model. With virtual events, trainings, and online activism tools, we supported young people to take action in their communities. Our youth activism efforts have enlisted 1.3 million young people to date to inspire lives free from smoking, vaping and nicotine, especially in communities of color and among other populations that have a long history of being targeted by the tobacco industry.

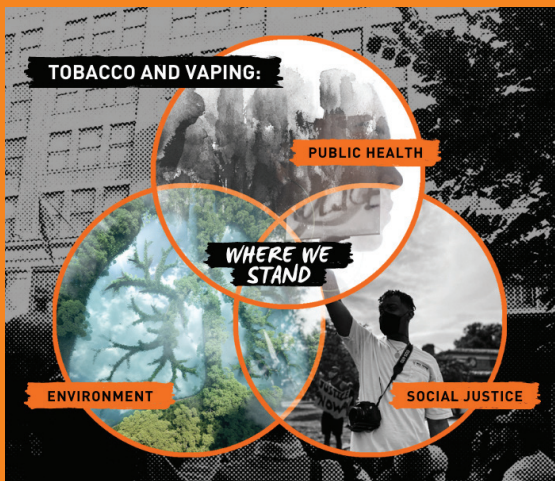
We inspire, educate and mobilize these young leaders, as well as coalitions and organizations, with online and on-the-ground action, youth leadership development, and creative partnerships and grants.

# MOMENT OF TRUTH

More than 200 young activists from across the country came together in November for a virtual gathering called *Moment of Truth* to speak out against the destructive effects tobacco and vaping companies have had on public health and the environment, and for their predatory marketing practices that have disproportionately impacted Black Americans and other communities of color.

The event was aligned with the **truth** campaign *Read Between the Lies* effort, which called to end Big Tobacco's racism. *Moment of Truth* participants committed to standing up and speaking out against vaping and tobacco's harmful practices and by signing the Truth Over Money pledge, and recruiting five friends to join the fight. To date, over 350 young people have signed the pledge.

*Moment of Truth* participants committed to standing up and speaking out against vaping and tobacco's harmful practices and by signing a pledge and recruiting five friends to join the fight.



## TOBACCO/VAPE-FREE COLLEGE PROGRAM

As part of a national movement among students, faculty and administrators to address smoking, vaping and nicotine use at college campuses throughout the U.S. and a continued commitment to addressing tobacco as a social justice issue, the Truth Initiative Tobacco/Vape-Free College Program provides grants of up to \$20,000 to eligible institutions to engage their campus community to address smoking and vaping.

The Tobacco/Vape-Free College Program added 14 grants in 2020, bringing the total to 125 campuses nationwide, helping to protect nearly 1.1 million students, faculty and staff with tobacco and vape-free policies. Since 2015, the Truth Initiative Tobacco/Vape-Free College Program has awarded more than \$2.5 million in funding to 205 community colleges, minority-serving institutions including HBCUs and PBIs, women's colleges and college systems. This roster includes 59 HBCUs and eight predominantly black institutions.

With 99% of smokers starting before age 26 and the youth vaping epidemic continuing, college campuses are critical to preventing young adults from starting tobacco use, aiding current smokers and vapers in quitting and reducing exposure to secondhand smoke for all.

# 125

**colleges  
& universities**

have formally adopted  
100% tobacco-free  
campus policies

# 1.1M

**student, faculty  
and staff members**

are protected with tobacco  
and vape-free policies







## STOP THE INFLUENCE

Answering the call from the hundreds of young activists who gathered for *Moment of Truth*, we joined forces with our partners at the African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council, Black Women's Health Imperative, and Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids to launch an effort calling on organizations to reject funding and partnership from tobacco and vaping companies.

**Stop the Influence: Reject Big Tobacco and Vape Money** organizes youth-serving, environmental, social and racial justice, and public health organizations; college and university leaders; faith groups; and cultural institutions to join forces to reject funding from or any form of partnership with tobacco and vaping companies and expose donations for what they are: Another industry public relations tactic.

As of this writing, 27 have signed the pledge and will continue to work with us to expose tobacco industry tactics and recruit more organizations to join us.

## VAPING: KNOW THE TRUTH

We met an urgent need this year to provide teachers, schools and communities with a resource that gives students the information they need to make informed choices about e-cigarettes, as well as tools to quit if they are already vaping.

***Vaping: Know the truth*** is a national youth vaping prevention curriculum developed as part of the **truth** campaign. The digital, self-led, peer-to-peer interactive course gives young people the facts about e-cigarette use and provides resources to quit with ***This is Quitting***, the first-of-its-kind text message program. Created with Kaiser Permanente and in collaboration with the American Heart Association, ***Vaping: Know the truth*** is available to schools and the public at large at no cost through the leading social impact education innovator, EVERFI.

The curriculum brings the power of **truth** and **This is Quitting** into classrooms nationwide to guide teachers and educate America's youth about the facts, and risks associated with e-cigarettes and to empower teens who vape to quit or better yet, to never start in the first place. In the first five months since its launch on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 127,887 students were actively using ***Vaping: Know the truth*** and nearly 55,000 students have completed the course.



## EDUCATOR TESTIMONIALS

*"I just have to tell you what an outstanding piece of curriculum the new vaping course is. I have taught for 15 years in wealthy and poor districts, urban and rural districts, and everywhere, kids are vaping — it starts as young as 5th-6th grade as older students 'use' younger kids to secretly sell vaping at school — pulling little kids into the cycle of addiction. I have watched a steady stream of students revolve in and out of the school restroom to catch a quick vape and return to class in a fog. It's epidemic and almost impossible to 'catch' because vape devices don't 'smell' and can be stashed in a pocket, or sox, or even underwear. I have seen it everywhere I have taught. I really commend the 'tone' of the modules and applaud the final slides that 'summarize' the key points about personal choice — No 'preaching' — that's GOOD! ...please pass along my thanks to this module's sponsors! Of all the worthy courses Everfi offers — this vaping one may be the most relevant, immediate, and important one. Great job."*

– High School Teacher, Maine

*"We had issues where students were bringing vapes to school and trying to use them. We had a few students get caught with them and had to suspend them. In the classrooms we have been talking to the kids about the dangers of vaping. Since using Vaping: Know the truth, my students have become more aware of what vaping is and the dangers that come with it. We have not had any students this year bring a vape to the school and I have not heard that many of my students even use vapes anymore."*

– High School Teacher, Missouri

*"Vaping has been a major epidemic in the last couple of years and our curriculum is just focused on drugs & alcohol. Students were impressed with the data & research in the course — [learning about the] tobacco industry history and their marketing efforts to young kids stood out. We implement in middle school as it helps their decision making moving forward."*

– Middle School Teacher, Illinois



## 2020 CLASS: TRUTH AMBASSADORS

The 2020 class of **truth** Ambassadors included 11 young leaders from across the country who designed local projects to inspire tobacco-free communities.

The 2020 class of **truth** Ambassadors planned projects ranging from creating a YouTube channel that breaks down tobacco marketing, developing a video contest for middle and high school students about how Big Tobacco has targeted young adults with flavored tobacco products, and completing a research project on JUUL from a young adult perspective.

The year-long immersive leadership program is designed to educate and train a group of 18- to 25-year-olds on the public health impact of tobacco and e-cigarettes, the importance of community and youth engagement, and tobacco policy and advocacy. The program helps them develop leadership and community activism skills while providing financial support to create and promote their projects.

**truth** Ambassadors have previous experience with tobacco control advocacy, are passionate about mobilizing their peers and making their communities tobacco-free. Six of the ambassadors were previously Truth Initiative college leaders, students at colleges and universities who undergo training in tobacco prevention campaigns and leadership development to organize their peers and build a movement to become a tobacco-free campus.



**INNOVATIONS  
TO QUIT  
SMOKING,  
VAPING, AND  
NICOTINE**

Digital cessation  
programs that save lives



**5x**

**Those who have ever used e-cigarettes were five times more likely to contract COVID-19 than those who do not use tobacco products.**

The coronavirus pandemic underscored the importance of quitting tobacco use to protect lung health. The CDC named smoking a risk factor for developing severe illness from COVID-19 and research from Stanford University showed those who have ever used e-cigarettes were five times more likely to test positive for COVID-19 than those who do not use tobacco products. Dual users of cigarettes and e-cigarettes were nearly seven times more likely to contract the respiratory disease. We have continued to be a resource for information about quitting tobacco use in all forms with our proven-effective quit programs that help people quit smoking, vaping and nicotine for good.

This past year marked major milestones for our quitting programs. We have now surpassed 300,000 enrollees in This is Quitting, our first-of-its-kind, free quit vaping program tailored for young people. The EX Program, our enterprise digital tobacco cessation program designed for employers, health systems and health plans, brought in its largest strategic partnerships to date, including our first major health plan – Blue Shield of California with 4 million members – and Virgin Pulse, the largest global wellness healthcare provider. Our first digital quit program BecomeAnEX – now 13 years running – continues to offer support to thousands on their quitting journeys for free with a plan that research has shown quadruples a tobacco user's chance of quitting.

Backed by science, we constantly evaluate and optimize these evidence-based resources to give people the best support available to quit tobacco use in all forms. Throughout 2020, we disseminated our work through academic journal articles and dozens of webinars and conference presentations to advance the science on how digital programs can help people of all ages live nicotine-free lives.

## THIS IS QUITTING

Launched in 2019 to meet an urgent need to help young people quit vaping, This is Quitting is setting the standard for quitting e-cigarettes, now helping more than 300,000 young people. The free and anonymous text message quit vaping program was created with input from teens, college students and young adults who have attempted to, or successfully, quit e-cigarettes. It is tailored by age group to give teens and young adults appropriate recommendations about quitting, and features tips and encouragement from other young people who have used the program.

The ground-breaking program is making a big difference. Funded with support from a CVS Health Foundation grant, our randomized clinical trial – the first-ever for a quit vaping intervention – rigorously evaluated the program among a diverse sample of 2,600 young adults from across the U.S. Filling a critical gap in the field, the forthcoming data will demonstrate the efficacy of This is Quitting and follows preliminary data published in *Nicotine & Tobacco Research* that showed after just two weeks of using This is Quitting, more than half of participants – 60.8% – reported that they had reduced or stopped using e-cigarettes. This is Quitting was also a key factor in Truth Initiative being named one of the world's 50 most innovative companies and a top 10 non-profit organization by Fast Company in 2020.

Now fully integrated with **truth** – including popular campaigns “Ready to Ditch JUUL” and *Quit Together* – This is Quitting continues to rapidly expand its enrollment. After the launch of Quit Together, which engaged social media influencers quitting live on their platforms, average weekly enrollment in This is Quitting nearly tripled in just a few weeks. In addition to enrolling hundreds of thousands of young people, we expanded This is Quitting to a client list of 21 groups and nine states in 2020 who receive a customized program and promotional materials to reach their unique populations.



**This is Quitting: Now helping**

**300,000+**

**young people quit vaping**

## EX PROGRAM

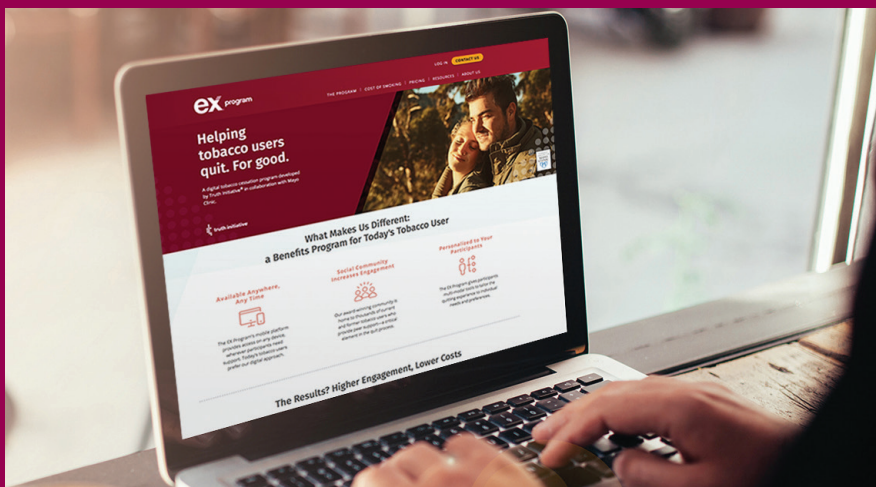
As a market leader in the health and wellness industry, the EX program is now reaching 6 million individuals with our key strategic partnerships. Developed by Truth Initiative in collaboration with Mayo Clinic, the EX Program delivers evidence-based approaches and tools to help tobacco users quit for good. These include a personalized quit plan, live chat coaching with tobacco treatment experts, free quit medication, and text messaging support. Clients receive quarterly program performance reports, monthly incentive achievement reports, promotional materials, and more.

Our roster of EX Program clients keeps growing both in number and size. After launching our first major health plan with Blue Shield of California, EX Program was selected by Anthem, the nation's second largest health plan with 40 million members. We brought in other big-name companies in 2020, including PepsiCo, with 140,000 employees; [Stonewall Kitchen](#), a well-known specialty food producer; and [B. Braun Medical](#), a medical products



and services company. We also continue to partner with local governments and groups to provide the EX program to their employees and members, including Camden County, New Jersey, and the Greater Philadelphia Business Coalition on Health, to name a few.

The industry is taking notice of our success. In addition to partnering with Virgin Pulse, the largest global wellness healthcare provider, the [EX Program](#) was selected as a top vendor on [Shortlister](#), a leading marketplace for employers, consultants, and health plans to find and select providers in the wellbeing and benefits space. The marketplace uses a wide range of criteria to evaluate top vendors, including stability, business practices, and buzz factor.



The EX program is now reaching 6 million individuals with our key strategic partnerships.

## BecomeAnEX

Our free, digital tobacco cessation program — BecomeAnEX — remains the largest and longest-running online community. Each month, thousands of current and former tobacco users support each other wherever they are on their quitting journey. Our research has shown the positive impact of engagement in an online social network in improving quitting outcomes. Especially during the social isolation and stress of COVID-19, the 24/7 support available on BecomeAnEX has been a critical part for thousands of tobacco users across the U.S. Since it launched in 2008 in collaboration with Mayo Clinic, BecomeAnEX has helped more than 910,000 people develop the skills and confidence to quit.

Quitting tobacco remains one of the most important steps people can take to protect their health. As we work toward a future where tobacco and nicotine addiction are things of the past, we continue to support people of all ages on their quitting journey.

**BecomeAnEX has helped more than 910,000 people develop the skills and confidence to quit.**





# AWARDS

While we will always measure success by the number of lives saved, we continue to be proud of the top industry awards we receive for our work. Prestigious honors from Fast Company — we were named one of its 50 Most Innovative Companies and 10 Most Innovative Not-for-Profit organizations of 2020 — kicked off a year that included many recognitions for our creativity, innovation, and efficacy. Below is a selection of awards we received during 2020 and the beginning of 2021.

## **Fast Company 2021 World Changing Ideas Awards**

— finalist in the Apps category for our work supporting young people during COVID-19

**Halo Award** — finalist in Best Education Initiative and in Best Health Initiative for Vaping: Know the truth\*

**PRWeek Purpose Awards** — won Best in Health for This is Quitting

**Fast Company** — Top 50 World's Most Innovative Companies, Top 10 Most Innovative Not-for-profit organizations

**Webbys** — honoree for “Chuggin on Clouds”

**Effe Awards** — won Silver in Disease Awareness & Education: Non-profit/ Health category for *The Truth About Opioids*: “Treatment Box” and a finalist in the Seasonal Marketing-Services category for “Tested on Humans”

**ARF David Ogilvy Awards** — won gold in Best Consumer Experience for “Ready to Ditch JUUL”, bronze in the Government, Public Service & Non-profit category for Tested on Humans, silver in Social Responsibility Awards for “Ready to Ditch JUUL”

**Shorty Awards** — won Best Use of TikTok for This is Quitting

**North American SABRE Awards** — Won gold in Issues Management for *The Truth About Opioids*



**Cynopsis Best of the Best Awards** — finalist in Profiting Off the Pandemic category for Best Social Good Partnership

**Adweek Out-of-Home Impact Awards** — Won in Best Nonprofit Advocacy Campaign for “Treatment Box”

**PR News Platinum Awards** — won Best in Media Relations in Nonprofit category for This is Quitting and won Honorable Mention in Integrated Communications, Marketing & PR Nonprofit category for This is Quitting

**ANA's REGGIE Awards** — won Silver in Age-Specific Marketing category for “Tested on Humans”

**2020 American Business Awards** — won Bronze Stevie Award for Achievement in Human Resources

**Alliance for Workplace Excellence** — won Workplace Excellence Seal of Approval and the Health & Wellness Seal of Approval

\*Winners to be announced in May 2021



# FINANCIALS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS



# TRUTH INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

## BALANCE SHEETS

JUNE 30, 2020 AND 2019 (IN THOUSANDS)

<b>ASSETS</b>		<b>2020</b>		<b>2019</b>
Cash and cash equivalents	\$	120,698	\$	122,090
Investments		727,479		792,313
Accrued interest receivable		241		281
Grants receivable		176		247
Prepaid expenses		902		1,621
Trades to be settled		111		353
Property and equipment, net		3,799		5,055
Other assets		200		427
Total	\$	853,606	\$	922,387

### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Liabilities:				
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$	9,542	\$	10,268
Liability on interest rate swap agreement		-		4,927
Loan payable		63,500		60,000
Deferred rent		4,096		4,547
Deferred revenue		196		82
Refundable advance		3,508		522
Other liabilities		916		1,571
Total liabilities	\$	81,758	\$	81,917
Net assets without donor restrictions		771,848		840,470
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>853,606</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>922,387</b>

# TRUTH INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

## STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES

YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2020 AND 2019 (IN THOUSANDS)

<b>REVENUE AND SUPPORT</b>		<b>2020</b>		<b>2019</b>
Rental income	\$	-	\$	185
Sponsored projects and other income		4,106		4,176
Investment income, net of fees		32,537		24,907
Gain on sale of 1724 Mass. Ave. building		-		8,817
Settlement proceeds:				
Public education		-		131
Total revenue and support	\$	36,643	\$	38,216
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Program expenses:				
Counter-marketing and public education	\$	63,872	\$	61,219
Communications		3,875		4,724
Truth Initiative Schroeder Institute		10,567		10,115
Innovations		7,830		6,423
Community and youth engagement		5,331		4,313
Program grants		1,630		1,820
Other programs		1,178		1,143
	\$	94,283	\$	89,757
Supporting services:				
General and administrative	\$	10,982	\$	11,669
Building expenses		-		258
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	\$	105,265	\$	101,684
Change in net assets	\$	(68,622)	\$	(63,468)
<b>NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS</b>				
Beginning	\$	840,470	\$	903,938
Ending	<b>\$</b>	<b>771,848</b>	\$	840,470

# TRUTH INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

## STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS

YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2020 AND 2019 (IN THOUSANDS)

<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:</b>		<b>2020</b>		<b>2019</b>
Change in net assets	\$	(68,622)	\$	(63,468)
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash used in operating activities:				
Realized and unrealized gain on investments	\$	(21,104)	\$	(13,871)
Other investment gain		(3,394)		(1,628)
Depreciation		1,753		1,805
Gain on sale of 1724 Mass. Ave. building		-		(8,817)
Change in interest rate swap agreement		(4,927)		1,488
Deferred rent		(451)		(405)
Changes in assets and liabilities:				
(Increase) decrease in:				
Accrued interest receivable		40		6
Grants receivable		71		95
Prepaid expenses		719		(9)
Trades to be settled		242		(329)
Other assets		227		(286)
Increase (decrease) in:				
Account payable and accrued expenses		(726)		(7,245)
Deferred revenue		114		(159)
Refundable advance		2,986		(680)
Other liabilities		(655)		380
Net cash used in operating activities	\$	(93,727)	\$	(93,123)

# TRUTH INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

## STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS

YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2020 AND 2019 (IN THOUSANDS)

<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
Proceeds from sale of 1724 Mass. Ave. building	\$ -	\$ 32,384
Purchase of property and equipment	(497)	(259)
Proceeds from sale of investments	268,506	285,357
Purchases of investments	(179,174)	(219,273)
Net cash provided by investing activities	\$ 88,835	\$ 98,209
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:</b>		
Proceeds from borrowings	\$ 3,500	\$ -
Net cash provided by financing activities	3,500	-
Net (decrease) increase in cash and cash equivalents	\$ (1,392)	\$ 5,086
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS:</b>		
Beginning	\$ 122,090	\$ 117,004
Ending	\$ 120,698	\$ 122,090
<b>SUPPLEMENTAL DISCLOSURES OF CASH FLOW INFORMATION:</b>		
Cash paid for interest	\$ 1,921	\$ 1,606
Cash paid for income taxes	\$ 138	\$ 47

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AS OF DECEMBER 2020

## **MIKE MOORE, CHAIR**

Principal, Mike Moore Law Firm, LLC  
Flowood, MS

## **NANCY BROWN, VICE CHAIR**

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American Heart Association  
Dallas, TX

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Attorney General of Nebraska  
Lincoln, NE

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Director, François-Xavier Bagnoud (FXB)  
Center for Health and Human Rights  
Boston, MA

## **GEORGES C. BENJAMIN, MD**

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American Public Health Association  
Washington, DC

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New Jersey Assemblyman  
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Governor of Ohio  
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President, i(x) Investments  
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Providence, RI

## **THE HONORABLE JOSH STEIN**

Attorney General of North Carolina  
Raleigh, NC

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Georgia State University  
Brooklyn, NY

## **GIANA DARVILLE, YOUTH BOARD LIAISON**

Oakwood University Alum  
Memphis, TN

\* Former Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo stepped down in 2021 to take on the role of U.S. Secretary of Commerce in the Biden Administration. She was replaced by Maine Governor Janet T. Mills.

# SENIOR LEADERSHIP

AS OF DECEMBER 2020

**ROBIN KOVAL**

Chief Executive Officer and President

**ERIC ASCHE**

Chief Marketing and Strategy Officer

**DERRICK BUTTS**

Chief Information and Cybersecurity Officer, IT

**DAVE DOBBINS**

Chief Operating Officer

**ROBERT FALK**

General Counsel

**AMANDA L. GRAHAM**

Chief of Innovations

**TRICIA KENNEY**

Chief Communications Officer

**ANTHONY O'TOOLE**

Executive Vice President and Chief Financial and Investment Officer

**ANNA M. SPRIGGS**

Chief of Human Resources and Administration

**AMY TAYLOR**

Chief of Community Engagement

**DONNA VALLONE**

Chief Research Officer, Truth Initiative Schroeder Institute





**truth  
initiative**

INSPIRING LIVES  
FREE FROM SMOKING,  
VAPING & NICOTINE

900 G Street, NW  
Fourth Floor  
Washington, DC 20001  
202.454.5555

[truthinitiative.org](http://truthinitiative.org)  
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