

## Answers to Kentucky's Youth Vaping Epidemic

### E-Cigarette Excise Tax

The Coalition supports adding an excise tax on the sale of e-cigarettes and vaping products sold in Kentucky; we are seeking a tax of 18.5 percent of the retail price, which is equivalent to the current excise tax on cigarettes of \$1.10/pack.

#### Key Points:

- E-cigarettes are the only tobacco product sold in Kentucky not currently subject to an excise tax.
- Raising the price of tobacco products via tax increases is the single most effective way to reduce tobacco use, especially among youth, pregnant women and those living on low incomes. (For example, in the first year following the 50 cents/pack cigarette tax increase in 2018, cigarette sales dropped by 36 million packs, or 10.1 percent.)
- High school student e-cigarette usage in Kentucky nearly doubled from 2017 (14.1%) to 2019 (26.1%); middle schooler usage more than quadrupled (from 3.9% to 17.3%). [[2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#)]
- E-cigarettes are not safe for youth or young adults; they contain high levels of nicotine, which harms the developing brain and primes it for other addictions, as well as other toxins.
- The proposed tax is expected to generate \$34 million in its first 12 months.

### Tobacco 21

The Coalition supports updating Kentucky law to comply with a new federal law raising the legal age for purchasing tobacco products from 18 to 21. We also support strong penalties to hold retailers responsible for underage sales, and oppose provisions that put youth into the court system for purchase, possession or use.

#### Key Points:

- Tobacco 21 delays tobacco initiation, decreases adult smoking, and prevents premature death.
- The vast majority of youth rely on “social sources” (friends and relatives) to get tobacco products rather than buying them themselves; youth are far more likely to engage with 18 and 19 year-olds than those who are 21 and older, so Tobacco 21 cuts off a major source of tobacco for youth.
- 95 percent of daily smokers started before age 21.
- Adolescent brains are more sensitive to nicotine, so youth who start using tobacco are more likely to become addicted and become adult tobacco users.
- Nicotine also “rewires” developing brains to make them more susceptible to other addictions, including to illicit drugs.

## Answers to Kentucky's Youth Vaping Epidemic

### Increased Funding for Prevention/Cessation

The Coalition supports increasing funding for statewide tobacco prevention and cessation efforts from \$3.3 million in fiscal 2020 to \$10 million in fiscal 2021. This funding supports the statewide Quitline and local health department cessation programs, as well as multi-media and local prevention education programs. The proposed increase would result in:

- 2.3 percent reduction in the youth smoking rate
- 2,600 fewer Kentucky kids growing up to become addicted adult smokers
- 800 fewer Kentucky kids who die prematurely from smoking
- \$54.6 million reduction in health care costs related to tobacco use

#### Key Points:

- Kentucky takes in \$497.4 million in tobacco revenues annually.
- Kentucky's \$3.3 million budget in fiscal 2020 to prevent tobacco use and help people quit smoking is 1/83<sup>rd</sup> of the \$278.7 million that the tobacco industry spends marketing its products in Kentucky.
- Kentucky's fiscal 2020 budget for prevention and cessation is less than 6 percent of what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends.
- Every \$1 spent on comprehensive prevention/cessation saves \$5 in reduced hospitalizations tied to tobacco use.
- Additional funding will be used for multi-media campaigns to educate youth and others about the dangers of vaping and tobacco use, support Kentucky's Quit Line smoking cessation program and enhance other services.

Updated 1-31-2020

Contact: Bonnie J. Hackbarth, [bhackbarth@healthy-ky.org](mailto:bhackbarth@healthy-ky.org), 877-326-2583 (office); 502-552-3770 (mobile)