

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: [BrownT56@michigan.gov](mailto:BrownT56@michigan.gov)

### **Governor Whitmer Takes Bold Action to Protect Michigan Kids from Harmful Effects of Vaping**

*Michigan becomes first state to ban flavored vaping products*

**LANSING, Mich.** -- Today, Governor Gretchen Whitmer took aggressive action to protect Michigan kids from the harmful effects of vaping. These actions include making Michigan the first state in the nation to ban flavored vaping products.

After her Chief Medical Executive, Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, made a finding that youth vaping constitutes a public health emergency, Governor Whitmer ordered the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to issue emergency rules to ban the sale of flavored vaping products in retail stores and online, and ban misleading marketing of vaping products, including the use of terms like “clean,” “safe,” and “healthy” that perpetuate beliefs that these products are harmless. The governor also ordered the Michigan Department of Transportation to enforce an existing statute to prohibit the advertising of vapor products on billboards.

“As governor, my number one priority is keeping our kids safe,” said **Governor Whitmer**. “And right now, companies selling vaping products are using candy flavors to hook children on nicotine and misleading claims to promote the belief that these products are safe. That ends today. Our kids deserve leaders who are going to fight to protect them. These bold steps will finally put an end to these irresponsible and deceptive practices and protect Michiganders’ public health.”

“Governor Whitmer has taken bold and appropriate action in response to the epidemic of youth e-cigarette use,” said **Nancy Brown**, CEO of the American Heart Association. “In the absence of robust regulation by the Food and Drug Administration, we know shockingly little about the health impact of e-cigarettes being widely marketed to youth and adults. The recent outbreak of respiratory illnesses associated with e-cigarette use has only added to the uncertainty and increased the need for immediate action. What we do know is nicotine is highly addictive and has adverse effects on the developing brain, and flavors strongly appeal to youth. Gov. Whitmer’s action will protect Michiganders, particularly the state’s youth, from the known and unknown potential health risks of e-cigarette use. We urge the FDA to move urgently to protect public health and exercise strict oversight over all e-cigarette products.”

On June 4 of this year, Governor Whitmer signed Senate Bills 106 and 155, which clarify that it is illegal to sell e-cigarettes and other non-traditional nicotine products to minors. In her signing message to the Legislature, Governor Whitmer criticized the

legislation for not going far enough to protect Michigan’s kids from nicotine addiction, calling the marketing, packaging, and taste of e-cigarettes a “bait-and-switch” engineered to “create new nicotine addicts.”

“In the past few years, we’ve seen an explosive increase in the number of Michigan kids exposed to vaping products,” said **Dr. Joneigh Khaldun**, chief medical executive for the State of Michigan and chief deputy director for health at MDHHS. “This is a public health crisis. These products can contain harmful chemicals that put our kids’ health at risk. I’m looking forward to working with Governor Whitmer to mitigate these effects and keep our kids healthy.”

From 2017 to 2018, e-cigarette use spiked 78% among high school students and 48% among middle school students. In 2018, more than 3.6 million U.S. kids, including 1 in 5 high school students and 1 in 20 middle school students were regular users. These rates are still climbing, likely fueled by the availability of flavors akin to apple juice, bubble gum, and Nerds.



*Examples of vaping products marketed towards kids*

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