



November 8, 2018

Dear Educators:

School administrators and teachers share the incredibly important mission of educating today's youth. It is your guidance and leadership that develops so many young people into tomorrow's leaders, and the impact you have on kids' lives is profound. You are not only teachers, guidance counselors, and principals, but also mentors, coaches, and confidants.

I know you are intimately aware of the variety of issues today's teens may face on a day-to-day basis—bullying, social media use, mental health, substance abuse, and relationships to name a few. Today I'm writing to you about a more recent issue facing teens across the nation: teen use of e-cigarettes, often referred to as "vaping" or "juuling."

Just 7 years ago, e-cigarettes were relatively unknown; but today, teens are seeing them used in high school bathrooms and classrooms, at parties, and in social media. In 2017, just over 1 in 10 high school students currently used an e-cigarette; now it is 1 in 5. That's more than 3 million kids, and after several years of decline, overall tobacco use is up, largely due to the rising popularity of e-cigarettes. Additionally, many teens do not view these products as harmful and some aren't even aware that most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, highlighting the need for a targeted youth education effort about the dangers of teen use of e-cigarettes.

In September 2018, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) unveiled its new public health education campaign, ["The Real Cost" Youth E-Cigarette Prevention Campaign](#). With as many as 80 percent of 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students not perceiving great risk of harm using e-cigarettes regularly, we are looking at a large group of teens who are susceptible or already experimenting with e-cigarettes. As a result, this digital campaign strives to snap teens out of their "cost-free" mentality by educating them about the risks of using e-cigarettes, including nicotine addiction. But while we're reaching them online, you're on the frontlines of another location where we all know they face the decision about whether to use e-cigarettes: in school.

That's why FDA is joining forces with Scholastic to provide free resources to school administrators and teachers designed to help you engage your students in discussions about the dangers of e-cigarettes. We've already provided campaign posters with messages about the dangers of e-cigarette use to more than 10,000 schools, but we need your help to do more. The enclosed materials include statistical data on the growing prevalence of e-cigarettes, facts on the health effects of using e-cigarettes, information about "The Real Cost" campaign, and a recommended lesson plan and activity sheet to help get your students talking about the dangers of e-cigarettes.

You can also find additional government-sponsored resources online or you can email tobacco-related inquiries to FDA at [AskCTP@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:AskCTP@fda.hhs.gov). The U.S. Surgeon General has a [web page about e-cigarettes](#); the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has [numerous fact sheets](#) for parents, teachers, and administrators; and FDA has other tobacco-related content available to download for free from its [Exchange Lab](#).

We hope these resources are helpful to you, and that they provide enough data and information to help you talk to your students. We look forward to working with you to break through the “cost free” mindset so many teens have regarding e-cigarette use. Our collective efforts worked well when it comes to regular cigarette use. Let’s work together to get teens to see the risks of e-cigarettes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Gottlieb MD". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the letters "S", "G", and "M" being particularly prominent.

Scott Gottlieb, M.D.  
Commissioner of Food and Drugs