

Winter 2024

# Big Tobacco Fantasyland Rural Toolkit

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Tobacco Prevention Program (CTPP) launched the *Big Tobacco's Fantasyland* campaign as part of a statewide initiative to counter tobacco industry messaging that vaping is a safe alternative to smoking. Vaping increases risk of stroke and may increase risk of lung cancer.<sup>123456789</sup> In fact, people who vape have a higher risk of stroke at a younger age than people who smoke cigarettes.

The following toolkit was developed to inform California's rural communities about the harms of vaping and the free quit resources available to all Californians. We invite you to use the toolkit's components including key messages, frequently asked questions, social posts, images, and newsletter/flyer copy to directly help end the destructive influence of the Tobacco Industry in rural communities.

### **Big Tobacco Fantasyland Key Messages**

Big Tobacco's fantasyland is a nightmare for us all.

Vaping increases the risk of serious disease like stroke, may increase the risk of lung cancer, and amplifies mental health conditions, like anxiety and depression. 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

Big Tobacco wants to be put in charge of, get credit for, and profit off solving<sup>21 22</sup> the number one cause of preventable death and disease<sup>23</sup> – the smoking epidemic *they* created.<sup>24</sup>

Vape use is an urgent public health concern in California, with high use rates among young adults and other groups aggressively targeted by Big Tobacco, including rural populations, communities of color and people experiencing mental health challenges.<sup>25</sup>

The *real* best way to undo the damage of Big Tobacco is by helping people who are addicted quit and prevent people from starting.

### Frequently Asked Questions

In addition to the key messages, we provide answers to important questions related to tobacco use that can be used in responding to public inquiries or outreach efforts unique for rural communities.

### **Vape Use and Health Harms**

### 1. Is vaping a problem in rural communities in California?

Yes, vape use is an urgent public health concern in rural California, a population that Big Tobacco targets aggressively.

Where vaping is the biggest concern is among rural youth. They vape at higher rates than their urban counterparts, 8.4% compared to 5.6%.<sup>26</sup> Rural youth tobacco use is 9.1% compared to the rest of California youth use at 6.6%.

Smoking is where the largest use rate differences are for rural adults compared to the rest of California, at 9% and 6% respectively. Vape use among rural adults is virtually the same, with rural adults vaping at 5% compared to the rest of California adults at 4.7%. Among rural adults, overall tobacco use is 15% compared to the rest of California adults at 11%.<sup>27</sup>

Rural Californians have an increased risk of tobacco-related diseases including lung and other cancers that can be caused or exacerbated by tobacco use.<sup>28</sup> Vaping increases risk of stroke,<sup>29</sup> and may increase risk of lung cancer.<sup>30 31 32 33 34 35 36 28</sup> It's critical to address rural youth vaping to prevent kids from facing a lifetime of addiction, disease, and death.<sup>37 38</sup>

### **Recognizing Big Tobacco in Rural Communities**

### 2. How does Big Tobacco impact rural communities?

Big Tobacco's dangerous strategy promises a "better tomorrow"<sup>39</sup> and "smoke-free future"<sup>40 41</sup> with dangerous, addictive vape products while still selling six trillion cigarettes each year,<sup>42</sup> including launching new cigarettes in California.<sup>43 44</sup> As smoking as declined in rural communities - They want to be put in charge of, get credit for, and profit off solving<sup>45 46</sup> the number one cause of preventable death and disease<sup>47</sup> – the smoking epidemic *they* created.<sup>48</sup>

When it comes to marketing, tobacco companies take advantage of less stringent tobacco retail licensing laws in rural communities and co-opt traditionally rural values of self-reliance and resilience, with images such as cowboys, hunters and racecar drivers, in predatory ad campaigns to push their profit-driven agenda.<sup>49</sup> And it's not just the "rite of passage"<sup>50</sup> messaging that Big Tobacco uses to normalize tobacco use<sup>51</sup> among rural populations but more recent marketing efforts emphasize their newest products, likes vapes and smokeless tobacco, as less harmful and safer to use.<sup>52</sup> <sup>53</sup> <sup>54</sup>

#### 3. How does Big Tobacco's marketing harm rural communities?

Creating and marketing products as "reduced harm" is a lucrative, proven strategy of Big Tobacco.<sup>55</sup> They know that marketing products as harm reduction devices has led to:

an increase in youth and young adult uptake of tobacco<sup>56</sup>;

Manage

- a decrease in successful cessation<sup>57</sup>;
- increases smoking relapse<sup>58</sup>; and
- undermines support for comprehensive tobacco control program efforts.<sup>59</sup>

### 4. How deadly is the tobacco industry?

Tobacco use remains a leading cause of preventable death and disease in California, as well as the nation. California has over **3 million adults who use tobacco, including cigarettes and vapes**. <sup>60</sup>

- The tobacco industry kills more than 40,000 Californians a year,<sup>61</sup> and is responsible for more than 1 in 7 deaths in California.<sup>62</sup> That's more than from AIDS, influenza, or diabetes.<sup>63</sup>
- Every year in California, secondhand smoke causes more than **400 lung cancer deaths** and more than **3,600 cardiac deaths**.

In rural communities, tobacco use has led to higher rates of poor health and health outcomes compared to people in urban areas.<sup>65</sup> <sup>66</sup> <sup>67</sup> And people living in rural areas have 18-20% higher rate of lung cancer death than people living in urban areas.<sup>68</sup>

# **Ending Big Tobacco's influence in California**

#### 5. Do restrictions on tobacco sales hurt small businesses?

No. A recent report showed that small businesses do not suffer when tobacco sales are off the table. <sup>69</sup> Across the nation, convenience store profits have increased despite decreasing cigarette sales. <sup>70</sup> Additionally, in states that have banned the sale of flavored tobacco products, data shows no reduction in the number of convenience or tobacco stores, employees at said stores, or wages. <sup>71</sup>

#### 6. Do we need to end the tobacco industry's influence on Californians?

Yes. The tobacco industry's decades of lies and manipulation have led to an epidemic of death and disease that kills 40,000 Californians every year<sup>72</sup> – and it's completely preventable.<sup>73</sup> The tobacco industry has aggressively targeted California's diverse communities with predatory practices which have tragically worsened health disparities among certain populations.<sup>74</sup> The tobacco industry's products kill thousands of nonusers too.<sup>75</sup> All Californians deserve healthy lives in communities, schools, and environments free of the tobacco industry's toxicity. Kids should grow up without the tobacco industry poisoning their childhood.

### **Social Resources**

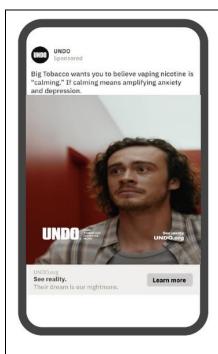
### Connect with UNDO on Social Media

Please like, comment and share, and tag/link to our channels to expose the tobacco industy for its deadly vape products. Consider creating hashtags to help people search and find your content easily and to drive momentum around rural tobacco prevention and cessation.

- www.facebook.com/UndoTobacco
- www.instagram.com/UndoTobacco
- www.youtube.com/@Undo

### **Social Messages for Posting**

Post copy can be customized for specific communities. Please include sources for credibility and substantiation. Download <u>fullsize images here.</u>



The tobacco industry wants you to believe vaping nicotine is "calming." If calming means amplifying anxiety and depression. [1] [2] [3] [4]

Vaping nicotine is associated with mental health issues and can permanently change the brain chemistry of teens and young adults. [5] [6]

Nicotine is a brain poison, and can amplify anxiety, depression, mood swings, and irritability. [7] [2] [3] [4] [8] [10]

Nicotine permanently damages the brain, making it primed for addiction to substances of all kinds.[6] [9]

See reality at UNDO.org

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Vape use is an urgent public health concern in California, with high use rates among young adults.[1]
Research shows kids who vape are 3x more likely to be daily cigarette smokers in the future.[2]

One of the most important things we can do to undo the damage of tobacco is help young people quit and prevent them from starting.

Visit KickltCA.org to learn more: <a href="https://kickitca.org/">https://kickitca.org/</a>.

#### Sources:

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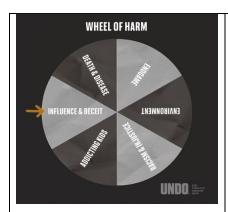
The tobacco industry pretends vapes are safer. The reality is:

- -Vaping increases the risk of stroke. [1]
- -People who vape have a higher risk of dying from a stroke at a younger age. [1] [2] [3]
- -Vaping has been associated with COPD, heart attacks and heart disease. [4] [5] [6]

See reality at UNDO.org

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Due to deceptive marketing, many believe vapes to be safer than cigarettes, but that couldn't be further from the truth. [1] [2] [3]

The same health harms associated with cigarettes are now being linked to vape products. Vaping increases the risk of serious disease like stroke, may increase the risk of lung cancer, and amplifies mental health conditions like anxiety and depression. [4] [5] [6] [7] [8] [9] [10] [11] [12] [13] [14]

One of the best ways to undo the damage caused by tobacco is to educate yourself on the health harms of vaping.

Visit UNDO.org to learn more: https://www.undo.org/exposed/bi g-tobacco-fantasyland. Sources:

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## Copy for print/digital outreach with accompanying rural images

This following copy is approved for use in flyers, email or newsletter outreach or printed communications. The copy can be tailored to your jurisdiction or community by incorporating vape use statistics. Click the following link to <u>download the full sizes</u> images featured below.



Did you know that vape use is an urgent public health concern in [Insert your location]?

Here in our community [Insert your community's percentage of kids who vape] % of kids and [Insert your community's percentage of adults who vape] % of adults vape.

Research shows vaping increases the risk of serious disease like stroke, may increase the risk of lung cancer, and amplifies mental health conditions like anxiety and depression. <sup>76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84</sup> 85 86

The tobacco industry has engineered vapes to maximize addictiveness by delivering a highly concentrated form of nicotine<sup>87</sup> – a chemical that is as addictive as heroin<sup>88</sup> – quickly to the body. Kids who vape are 3 times more likely to be daily cigarette smokers in the future.<sup>89</sup> Nicotine permanently damages the brain, making it primed for addiction to substances of all kinds.<sup>90</sup> Vape products are camouflage for Big Tobacco's attempt to renormalize tobacco use, which continues to kill thousands of Californians each year.<sup>91</sup> And many people who use vapes to quit smoking cigarettes end up using both products, making Big Tobacco a killing.<sup>92</sup> 93 94 95 96

Our rural communities are not immune from Big Tobacco's predatory targeting, creating higher use and disease rates among both rural adult and youth Californians compared to the overall population. Yaping has been linked to chronic illness like COPD, heart attacks and heart disease. 98 99 100

ALL Californians deserve a healthy future and protecting [Insert your community's name] from the tobacco industry makes our community stronger and healthier. The real best way to undo the damage of Big Tobacco is by helping people who are addicted quit and by preventing kids from starting.

CTA: Learn more at Undo.org. For free quit help visit kickitca.org

### Resources

For more resources from the Big Tobacco's Fantasyland Campaign please visit the <u>Partners Public Relations webpage</u>. If you have any questions about these resources, help is available by filling out a Technical Assistance request from the <u>Partners Media Library</u>.

al. For internal use only

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