



**SMOKE FREE
AREA**

Volume 1, Issue 3



FDA Moves to Ban Menthol

The FDA recently [announced](#) that it will move to ban menthol in cigarettes and all flavors in cigars, based on evidence that suggests the change will reduce disease and death linked to tobacco products. The FDA said that it plans to issue two standards to enforce the flavor bans within the next year.

The new standards will ban menthol flavoring in cigarettes and all flavor additives in cigars, including menthol. The decision was based on scientific evidence showing the addictiveness and harm these products can cause.

Studies have shown that a ban on menthol flavoring will help people to stop using tobacco products. Menthol is used to mask unpleasant flavors and harshness of tobacco, thus, making it easier for people to start using tobacco products and become addicted. Menthol-flavored tobacco products also enhance the effects of nicotine, making them more addictive and harder to quit than non-flavored products.



Legislative Update

which ended on May 31, the 87th Texas Legislature passed [SB 248](#) by Senator Nathan Johnson.

SB 248 updates how Texas monitors tobacco and e-cigarette retailers. Starting in January 2022, anyone selling e-cigarette products will have to get a permit from the state. Additionally, retailer penalties for selling any tobacco product to minors will be doubled, and the state will have more time to monitor retailers for violations.

Events/Health Observances

Click on the dates below to access more information about the event or observance, if available.

July

JUL 26-28	Say What! Virtual Conference
----------------------	------------------------------------

August

AUG 1	World Lung Cancer Day
------------------	--------------------------

September

SEP	Blood Cancer Awareness Month
------------	------------------------------------

SEP	Childhood Cancer Awareness Month
------------	--

SEP	Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month
------------	--------------------------------------

SEP	Prostate Cancer Awareness Month
------------	---------------------------------------

SEP 25	World Lung Day
-------------------	-------------------

[Click here to learn the latest on COVID-19.](#)



Live Vape Free Online Courses

In 2020, 14.3 percent of Texas high school students reported that they had vaped in the past 30 days. More than 4 million high schoolers in the U.S. also reported vaping in the past 30 days. One third of all parents report being very concerned about their kids and vaping. E- may find it stressful to figure out how to start a conversation with their children about vaping. This new online course might help.

The Live Vape Free online courses are available for parents, caregivers and educators as a way to help better understand vaping. This program will teach adults how to have a conversation about vaping with a young person in their life. The online courses are self-paced and designed to turn parents, guardians, and adult advocates into quit champions.

The online courses are provided through the Texas Tobacco Quitline at no cost and are easy to enroll in. Each lesson contains videos, discussion forums, journaling, polls, and interactive exercises.

Click on the [link](#) to learn more about the Live Vape Free program. Click on “Texas” to create your personalized login and begin learning.



Vapes Down Campaign Wins Awards

The Texas Department of State Health Services' Vapes Down campaign won two Blue Pencil & Gold Screen Awards from the National Association of Government Communicators (NAGC). The Vapes Down traveling exhibit won an Award of Excellence for the Community Engagement Forum category and the Social Media Campaign (Paid Advertising) for Vapes Down also won an Award of Excellence.

NAGC awards underscore the association's high standards of professionalism in public service. Awards of Excellence recognize government agencies or individuals for significant achievement. NAGC rewards excellence in the field of communications with awards in over 40 categories in the annual Blue Pencil & Gold Screen Awards.



New Product Alert

A new wave of synthetic nicotine products is emerging on the market, raising regulatory questions and health concerns as youth vaping continues at epidemic levels.

The disposable e-cigarette Puff Bar and oral nicotine products Bidi Pouches, NIIN and Rush are a few of these new products marketing synthetic nicotine, or nicotine that was created in a laboratory and not derived from tobacco. These new products, which have not been through the required regulatory review and approval processes, also come in flavors that are proven to attract youth.

While it is too early to know whether the health effects of synthetic nicotine are different than those of tobacco-derived nicotine, we do know that these products threaten to addict more young people. Visit the [Truth Initiative](#) for more information.



Say What! Virtual Conference

The Say What! Virtual Conference offers a variety of opportunities to get the most out of one of the best youth leadership events in the country for all youth groups working to reduce tobacco use in their school or community. Join us Monday, July 26 – Wednesday, July 28. [Visit the website for more information about the conference.](#)

This year's conference offers several main sessions for youth and adults on Monday and Tuesday. Participants will hear from Say What! Teen Ambassadors (TA) and youth groups as well as experts from diverse fields. The conference will also include two separate sessions on Wednesday for adults and sponsors.

Youth going into 9th -11th grade who are interested in applying to become a Say What! Teen Ambassador will have the opportunity to learn about the application process and hear TAs discuss what it means to be a Teen Ambassador. [Register for the conference today!](#) Registrations must be received by July 23, 2021.



Newsletter Survey

We want to hear from you! Are you enjoying this newsletter? Are there other things you'd like to see us cover? Do you have any other comments or suggestions? Please respond to our [anonymous survey](#) regarding the newsletter by July 15. Your responses will be used to improve future issues of the newsletter. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Andrea Littlefield at andrea.littlefield@dshs.texas.gov.

Email us your content ideas and what you want to see in this newsletter at:
Tobacco.Free@dshs.texas.gov.

You are subscribed to updates from the Texas Department of State Health Services' Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch. For more information, please [email us](#) or [visit our website](#).