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News Release

February 20, 2019

Increased E-cigarette Advertising and Teen Vaping

WASHINGTON COUNTY, UT – The Southwest Utah Public Health Department (SWUPHD) has seen an increase in advertising for e-cigarette/vaping products, raising concerns about influence on children and teens. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has found that an increase in e-cigarette advertising correlates with increases in use by youth under 18. Surveys of local gas stations, grocery stores, and vape shops since 2016 show a 470% increase in e-cigarette promotions.

“Vape products disproportionately harm youth,” says Kye Nordfelt, SWUPHD Health Promotion Director. “While some may argue that e-cigarettes are intended only for adults and can be an effective tool to stop smoking, studies show that twice as many teens than adults vape in Southwest Utah. Their popularity is leading toward another generation of nicotine addicts”.

The rate of substance use among Utah teens is typically well below national averages, but vaping is an exception. Teens in our community vape at the same rate as the rest of the U.S. with about 37% of Washington County 12th graders reporting having used e-cigarettes at least once.

About one-fourth of teens who vape are able to get vape products from local retailers. All stores that sell e-cigarettes offer flavored products - which are preferred by most teen users - like candy, fruit, and mint.

In an effort to educate parents and teens on the hazards of vaping, the SWUPHD is offering a free online tool called “Clearing the Vapor”, which reads like social media with videos and limited text. “Clearing the Vapor has been used by hundreds of teens,” Nordfelt says. “This information has been effective in changing perceptions about the harms of e-cigarettes.” Parents and teens can access Clearing the Vapor at www.swuhealth.org/ctv.

The SWUPHD also offers free presentations to parents and youth groups which address the health risks of vaping. Call Kye at 435-986-2593 to schedule a presentation.

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