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## FLORIDA'S YOUTH CONTINUE THE FIGHT AGAINST BIG TOBACCO IN HONOR OF TAKE DOWN TOBACCO NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION



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**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** – Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT), is observing Take Down Tobacco National Day of Action on April 1, 2021. Formerly known as Kick Butts Day, the annual observance encourages youth to speak out against the tobacco industry. Take Down Tobacco National Day of Action is organized by Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and empowers youth to educate their communities as we work together to achieve the first tobacco free generation. The April 1 date was chosen to bring awareness to the tobacco industry's deceptive tactics used to “fool” youth and lure them to try their deadly products.

In 2020, 21.6% of high schoolers and 8.2% of middle schoolers in Florida used e-cigarettes while only 2.3% of high schoolers and 1.1% of middle schoolers in Florida used cigarettes.<sup>1,2</sup> Research has found that youth who use e-cigarettes are more likely to go on to use other tobacco products, like conventional cigarettes.<sup>3,4,5,6</sup>

“Vaping is a bigger problem now than tobacco ever was,” said Thomas Harvell, assistant principal at Crestview High School. “Before we had kids that smoked or dipped tobacco in small groups, now everyone has a vape pen and it seems to be much more widely accepted.”

The Crestview High School SWAT team is working to create 3D displays to educate their peers on the dangers of tobacco use. They will be building tombstones and placing them around the school to honor some of the many lives taken by the tobacco industry. They are also creating a model of a vape cloud to teach others about the harmful components in the aerosol produced by electronic nicotine delivery systems.

SWAT continues to advocate for a tobacco free generation through initiatives like *Not A Lab Rat*, which empowers young people to stand up and declare that they refuse to be Big Tobacco's “lab rats.” SWAT hopes to inspire youth to reject the tobacco industry and urge their elected officials to take action to protect youth from a lifetime of nicotine addiction.

To learn more about SWAT's efforts and how to become an advocate, visit [swatflorida.com](http://swatflorida.com) and contact your local SWAT Coordinator at [tobaccofreeokaloosa@flhealth.gov](mailto:tobaccofreeokaloosa@flhealth.gov).

### About Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT)

SWAT is Florida's statewide youth organization working to mobilize, educate and equip Florida youth to revolt against and de-glamorize Big Tobacco and the e-cigarette industry. SWAT is a united movement of empowered youth working towards a tobacco free future.

To learn more about Students Working Against Tobacco, visit [www.swatflorida.com](http://www.swatflorida.com) or follow us on Instagram at [@swatflorida](https://www.instagram.com/swatflorida).

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<sup>1</sup> Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS), Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology, 2019. (Accessed January 11, 2021)

<sup>2</sup> Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS), Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology, 2019. (Accessed January 12, 2021)

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [E-cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General.pdf icon](#) [PDF – 8.47MB] Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2016. (Accessed January 11, 2021)

<sup>4</sup> Berry KM, Fetterman JL, Benjamin EJ, et al. Association of Electronic Cigarette Use With Subsequent Initiation of Tobacco Cigarettes in US Youths. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2019;2(2):e187794. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2018.7794. (Accessed January 11, 2021)

<sup>5</sup> Miech R, Patrick ME, O'Malley PM, et al E-cigarette use as a predictor of cigarette smoking: results from a 1-year follow-up of a national sample of 12th grade students *Tobacco Control* 2017;26:e106-e111(Accessed January 11, 2021)

<sup>6</sup> National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2018. Public Health Consequences of E-Cigarettes. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/24952> (Accessed January 11, 2021)