



Please Vote “Yes” on HB16-1150

County Authority to Regulate Tobacco Possession and Use by Minors Sponsor: Rep. Conti

In 2008, the Colorado General Assembly passed the Teen Tobacco Use Prevention Act. The Act empowers local governments to restrict the sale of tobacco products to minors and is a very important legislative tool for protecting our young people. The act has been amended since its initial passage, but methods of tobacco (and marijuana) usage have changed since the act was amended and additional clarifications are needed to permit counties to keep pace with these changes in teen smoking habits.

At the heart of the issue is the increasing use of e-cigarettes and vaporizers (or “vapes” as they are often called) by teens. The use of these e-cigarettes and vapes has become a serious problem in many of our schools, especially since they are more discrete than cigarettes and can be used to smoke marijuana as well as a variety of flavored tobacco products. The definition of “tobacco delivery devices” has been amended in statute to include these e-cigarettes and vapes, but **not** in the sections of statute that outline county regulatory authority to adopt and enforce ordinances regarding possession and use by minors. The issue is further complicated by the fact that county legal authority is scattered across several different areas of the statutes, and these laws and authorities do not always work in a seamless fashion.

HB16-1150 better enables counties to protect their young people by truing up these various statutes and allowing counties to adopt and enforce ordinances prohibiting minor possession and use of tobacco and tobacco delivery devices.

CCI asks for your support of HB16-1150

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Editorial: Troubling trends on teen smoking

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As far as public health campaigns go, it's hard to rival the one launched by the American government to curtail cigarette smoking.

Since 1964, when health studies prompted Surgeon General Luther L. Terry to link cigarette use to myriad health consequences, the campaign to decrease smoking has been one fought across many fronts. Warning labels, advertising limitations and taxation are among the measures still being employed 40 years later.

However, a study released last week by the University of Southern California notes that after many years of reductions in the number of Americans who smoke, use by young people appears to be on rise.

Chief among the reasons cited for increased teen use: the rise in prominence of e-cigarettes, also commonly known as vaping. Such devices can deliver nicotine while also introducing other flavors that are marketed toward younger consumers.

The study found that e-cigarettes were a gateway for young adults to try other nicotine products, especially cigarettes. In addition, a significant percentage of young adults who were predisposed against smoking cigarettes had their opinions altered if they had tried e-cigarettes.

What's most troubling about the trend is that so far the jury is still out regarding the health effects of e-cigarettes. While some scientists have sounded the alarm about some of the byproducts of the vaping process, there are still many unknowns surrounding the use of e-cigarettes. In addition, some in Congress are sounding the alarm over the unregulated importation of e-cigarette devices from China, noting there could be unforeseen health effects.

The Centers for Disease Control are clear about the health effects of smoking, however. Smoking is strongly linked to heart disease and lung cancer, and the public costs from secondhand smoke are borne by taxpayers.

Those who have young adults in their lives should talk to them about the potential dangers of moving from e-cigarettes to tobacco, because there are two generations of data to sound the alarm.

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Teen smoking a problem regionally

Overall, trend declines nationally

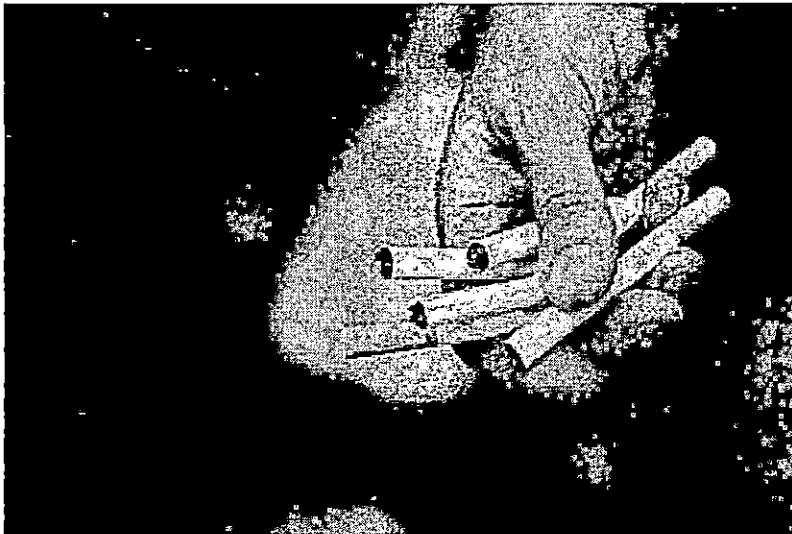


Photo by: Hyoung Chang/The Denver Post file photo
Teen smoking is down nationally, but the trend appears higher than average among high-school students in Southwest Colorado.

By Dale Rodebaugh Herald staff writer

Underage cigarette smoking in Southwest Colorado appears high compared with the national trend, which shows that smoking by middle- and high-school students declined significantly from 2002-03 to 2012-13.

Cigarette smoking by 12- to 17-year-olds nationally fell from 12.57 percent in 2002-03 to 6.08 percent in 2012-13, the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration said in a report released Monday.

The decline was based on replies from students ages 12 to 17 who were asked if they had smoked at least one cigarette in the past month.

Among Colorado youths, 13.74 percent said they had smoked within the previous month in 2002-03 compared to 6.29 percent in 2012-13, the report said.

The only state that didn't show a statistically significant decline in past-month smoking was Utah, where the decline went from 6.57 to 5.4 percent.

But in Southwest Colorado, data from the 2013 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey showed that 14.2 percent of high school students in Archuleta, La Plata, Montezuma, San Juan and Dolores counties had smoked at least one cigarette in the previous 30 days.

In middle schools in the same counties, 3.9 percent had used cigarettes at least once in the previous month.

When cigars, chewing tobacco, snuff and dip were added to the list, 23 percent of high-school students in Southwest Colorado had indulged at least once. The number of middle-school students who had tried chewing tobacco, snuff, dip or cigars reached 7.4 percent.

E-cigarettes also proved a temptation to high-school students in the five-county region. Twenty-one percent of high-school students have tried e-cigarettes. No statistics were given for middle-school students.

The focus of anti-smoking programs at San Juan Basin Health Department is prevention, said spokeswoman Flannery O'Neil.

"A lot of our effort is working with providers on cessation programs," she said. "We want to keep kids from starting to smoke."

She said health workers are keeping their eye on e-cigarettes because their use seems to be gaining a foothold.

"States have been at the center of efforts to reduce adolescent smoking through cigarette taxation, enactment of laws that restrict smoking in public places, enforcement of laws that prohibit the sale and distribution of tobacco products to adolescents and the funding of smoking-prevention and cessation programs," the SAMHSA report says.

Adolescents' perception of the risk of smoking one or more packs of cigarettes a day has increased as well – the perception of risk being inversely proportional to use. That is, use is lower among those who perceive a high risk.

The perception of risk from smoking at least one pack of cigarettes a day increased nationally from 63.67 to 64.96 percent. In Colorado, the percentage increased from 63.77 to 66.56 percent.

Past-month cigarette use among adolescents in Alaska declined over 10 years – from 13.25 to 6.44 percent. But paradoxically, the perception of the danger of smoking also declined – from 66.56 to 59.06 percent. Alaska was the only state in which the anomaly was seen.

"Youth perception of risk has not changed significantly," the SAMHSA report said. "Highlighting the prevalence of cigarette use and attitudes as well as monitoring changes may help federal, state and local policymakers continue to allocate resources to combat adolescent smoking, including efforts to reduce the availability of tobacco products to young people, raise awareness about smoking and improve prevention efforts."

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File photo
E-cigarette use among middle and high school students tripled from 2013 to 2014 nationwide, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

Teen e-cigarette use on the rise; Northwest Colorado program addresses issue

By Lauren Blair, Teresa Ristow

Friday, September 11, 2015

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Craig — The trendy smoking fad of this generation's teenage population is proving to be electronic cigarettes, according to the Centers for Disease Control statistics and those who work with teens here in Northwest Colorado.

Nationwide, e-cigarette use among middle and high school students tripled from 2013 to 2014, with 13.4 percent of high school students now admitting to use within the past 30 days, according to the CDC.



U.S. Food and Drug Administration/Courtesy
E-cigarettes, battery-

Electronic cigarettes, also called electronic nicotine delivery systems, are battery operated and typically deliver nicotine, flavorings and other chemicals in a vapor to users, though not all contain the same ingredients and not all contain nicotine. The devices are small, and often resemble a regular cigarette, pen or other small item, like a USB drive.

The interest in e-cigarettes is evident locally, according to staff

operated products designed to deliver nicotine, flavor and other chemicals to smokers, are growing in popularity among local teens.

at Grand Futures Prevention Coalition, a group that works to prevent youth substance abuse in Moffat, Routt and Grand counties.

"The problem is that if these e-cigarettes have nicotine, that's highly addictive," said Maggie Rainwater, tri-county tobacco coordinator for Grand Futures.

Rainwater said that e-cigarettes appeal to students for a handful of reasons, including the ease of playing with the light vapor they emit, which teens enjoying blowing smoke rings with.

The vapor quickly dissipates and e-cigarettes are fairly discrete in appearance, making them appealing to youth at school, who sometimes like to blow out vapor when their teacher's back is turned, Rainwater said.

"I think the big draw for teens is the 'vape' tricks," Rainwater said.

Because there is little governmental regulation of e-cigarettes, which hit the market in the United States about 2006, the short- and long-term health implications are still unclear.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently held three public workshops on e-cigarettes and public health and are reviewing information from an open comment period that ended in July.

Moffat County High School Principal Kelly McCormick said e-cigarette use is more difficult to catch among students than regular cigarettes.

"You gotta see it, and it dissipates really quickly, there's no lighter and there's no smell of smoke," he said. "It's totally targeted towards kids because it's got flavors like strawberry and watermelon. It's disturbing to me."

What also disturbs McCormick is that there's no way of knowing at first glance what kids are smoking, as e-cigarettes can also be used to smoke marijuana.

MCHS students caught using a tobacco product, including an e-cigarette, get a phone call to their parents, their device or product confiscated and are required to do a couple days of campus cleanup. The second offense entails a three-day suspension from school.

To help address the problem locally, Grand Futures Moffat County Program Director Cassandra Vigil is launching a Tobacco Task Force, which will hold its first meeting Thursday.

"We definitely want to look at the presence of tobacco among teens and definitely want to lower the use of tobacco in our community," Vigil said.

The task force and other tobacco education is funded by the State Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership grant recently acquired by Grand Futures from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

Vigil is currently working in partnership with Craig Police School Resource Officer Norm Rimmer and school administrators to plan Red Ribbon Week at Craig Middle School in October. The week will celebrate students being drug-free and include activities, education, a party and a pledge, as well as prizes.

Vigil hopes to be able to offer more prevention education to schools, individual classrooms and parent groups in the coming year.

"We are a free resource for prevention education," she said. "We hope to be utilized."

To get involved, contact Cassandra Vigil at 970-824-5752 or Cassandra@grandfutures.org.

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