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Colorado Kids Will Kick Butts – and Juul – on March 20 *State Leaders Challenged to Fight Skyrocketing Epidemic of Youth E-Cigarette Use*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Kids in Colorado will unite against tobacco use on March 20 as they join thousands of young people nationwide to mark Kick Butts Day, an annual day of youth activism sponsored by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. More than 1,000 events are planned across the United States (see below for a list of local events).

This year, kids are focused on kicking Juul, the e-cigarette that has become enormously popular among youth across the country.

While cigarette smoking among high school students nationwide has fallen to 8.1 percent, e-cigarette use among high schoolers rose by an alarming 78 percent in 2018 alone – to 20.8 percent of the student population. In 2018, more than 3.6 million middle and high school students used e-cigarettes. U.S. public health leaders have called youth e-cigarette use an “epidemic” that is addicting a new generation of kids.

In Colorado, an alarming 26.2 percent of high school students use e-cigarettes, while 7 percent smoke cigarettes. Tobacco use claims 5,100 lives in Colorado and costs the state \$1.9 billion in health care bills each year.

On Kick Butts Day, youth and health advocates are calling for strong action to reverse the youth e-cigarette epidemic. In particular, they are calling on the Food and Drug Administration, states and cities to ban all flavored tobacco products, including e-cigarettes in flavors like cotton candy, gummy bear and mango that tempt kids. Other effective strategies to reduce youth tobacco use include laws raising the tobacco sale age to 21, significant tobacco tax increases, comprehensive smoke-free laws and well-funded tobacco prevention programs.

In Colorado, advocates are supporting state and local efforts to raise the tobacco sale age to 21.

“This year on Kick Butts Day, we’re challenging policy makers at every level to do their part to reverse the youth e-cigarette epidemic and continue driving down youth tobacco use,” said Matthew L. Myers, President of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. “We cannot allow e-cigarettes, especially Juul, to addict another generation and reverse the enormous progress we’ve made in reducing youth tobacco use.”

Key facts about e-cigarettes include:

- The main cause of the youth e-cigarette epidemic is Juul, which looks like a computer flash drive, is small and easy to hide, delivers a powerful dose of nicotine, and comes in kid-friendly flavors like mango, fruit and mint. According to the manufacturer, each Juul “pod” (cartridge) delivers as much nicotine as a pack of 20 cigarettes.

- E-cigarettes pose serious health risks for kids. [The U.S. Surgeon General](#) has found that youth use of nicotine in any form – including e-cigarettes – is unsafe, causes addiction and can harm the developing adolescent brain, affecting learning, memory and attention. Studies also show that young people who use e-cigarettes are more likely to become cigarette smokers.

On Kick Butts Day, youth join in creative events including signing pledges to be tobacco-free, learning about the harmful chemicals in tobacco products and organizing rallies at state capitols.

In Colorado, activities include:

The “**Where Do Butts Go?**” positive activism campaign is hosting **ButtFest** to divert cigarette waste from waterways and landfills in **Denver**. Youth are invited to join a volunteer-led neighborhood cleanup of cigarette butts and to learn from educational exhibits at the event. Time: 11:30 AM. Location: The Collective, 2041 Lawrence Street, Denver. Contact: Nick Phillips (303) 525-6158.

Students with **Eastlake High School** in **Colorado Springs** will participate in small group sessions about the effects of smoking with pig lung demonstrations and will learn about alternatives to smoking. Time: 10 AM. Location: Eastlake High School, 2520 Airport Road, Colorado Springs. Contact: Cassandra Berry (719) 271-0145.

Students with **Second Creek Elementary School** in **Commerce City** will hold a school-wide spirit day to promote awareness of the dangers of tobacco use, and students will be signing tobacco-free pledges. Time: 7:55 AM. Location: Second Creek Elementary School, 9950 Laredo Drive, Commerce City. Contact: Danielle Causby (303) 710-1154.

Students at **Panorama Middle School** in **Colorado Springs** will hold a Community Clean-Up Day, walking the campus to gather littered cigarette butts and placing them in a clear container to put on display and encourage non-smoking. The event is open to the public and hot dogs will be served to all participants in cleaning up. Time: 4:30 PM. Location: Panorama Middle School, 2145 S. Chelton Road, Colorado Springs. Contact: Sandra Graham (719) 579-3220.

All events will take place March 20 unless otherwise indicated. For a full list of Kick Butts Day activities in Colorado, visit www.kickbuttsday.org/map. Additional information about tobacco, including state-by-state statistics, can be found at www.tobaccofreekids.org.

