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Florida 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 Florida 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 Florida, an alarming 24.8 percent of high school students use e-cigarettes, while 3.6 percent smoke cigarettes. Tobacco use claims 32,300 lives in Florida and costs the state \$8.6 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.

“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 Florida, activities include:

To celebrate Kick Butts Day, members of **Never Start** will attend the **City of Hollywood Commission Meeting** to sign an anti-smoking proclamation, and they will announce the official “No Smoking and No Vaping With Love” sign. Time: 1 PM. Location: City Commission Chambers, 2600 Hollywood Boulevard, Room 219. Contact: Leah Olstein (954) 687-5049.

In an effort to promote tobacco-free schools, smoke-free air, and Tobacco 21, students from **Citrus High School in Inverness** will display chalk outlines of bodies with tobacco point-of-sale facts inside them across the school’s campus. Time: 8:30 AM. Location: 600 W. Highland Boulevard, Inverness. Contact: Aspen Welfel (352) 419-9033.

The **Students Working Against Tobacco Club** at **Ronald W. Reagan Senior High School in Miami** will engage in a day of activism to educate peers about the dangers of tobacco and e-cigarettes by displaying “Deadly Facts” about the effects of nicotine poisoning and addiction, as well as by constructing and signing a pledge wall. Time: 10:35 AM. Location: 8600 NW 107 Avenue, Doral. Contact: Lucy-Marie Trabanco (305) 608-8263.

The **Daytona State College Respiratory Care Program** in **Daytona Beach** will provide smoking cessation materials and will be discussing the dangers of smoking with college students on campus. Time: 1 PM. Location: 1200 International Speedway Boulevard, Daytona Beach. Contact: Sandy Lake (386) 290-5056.

On March 21, in partnership with **Drug Free St. Lucie**, the **St. Lucie County Students Working Against Tobacco Chapter** will present their #NotALabRat campaign to attendees of **Farfromdruggen**, a drug and alcohol prevention resource fair for youth and parents in **Fort Pierce**, to educate the community about the dangers of Big Tobacco. Time: 10 AM. Location: 2902 Avenue D, Fort Pierce. Contact: Esteban Mendez (772) 301-4395.

On March 23, members of the **Students Working Against Tobacco** organization in **Wauchula** will host a cigarette butt cleanup to remove this growing eyesore at **Oak Street Park**. Time: 10:30 AM. Location: 310 N. 8th Avenue, Wauchula. Contact: Deja Sparkman (863) 837-7888.

On March 27, the **Students Working Against Tobacco** organization at **Royal Palm Beach Community High School in Royal Palm Beach** will educate peers on the toll of tobacco and e-cigarettes by creating a display of tobacco statistics and facts on “dots” hung up throughout school. Time: 11 AM. Location: 10600 Okeechobee Boulevard, Royal Palm Beach. Contact: Alisha Maragh (561) 516-9596.

On March 30 and March 31, the **Florida Department of Health in Monroe** will hand out educational materials to families, youth and military members, as well as free cessation resources, at the 2019 Southernmost Air Show in **Key West**. Time: 9 AM. Location: Saratoga Avenue, Boca Chica Field, Key West. Contact: Priscilla Bennett (305) 619-2915.

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

