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Indiana 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 Indiana 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 organized by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and sponsored in Indiana by Interact for Health. 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 Indiana, 10.5 percent of high school students use e-cigarettes, while 8.7 percent smoke cigarettes. Tobacco use claims 11,100 lives in Indiana and costs the state \$2.9 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 Indiana, youth advocates are urging state lawmakers to raise the state cigarette tax by \$2.00 per pack.

“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 Indiana, activities include:

On March 19, the **Mulberry Methodist Youth Group** will conduct a cigarette butt pick up around the city of **Mulberry** and participate in tobacco jeopardy. Time: 3:30 PM. Location: ABBA's Place, 112 E. Jackson Street, Mulberry. Contact: Emily Bossung (219) 869-1304.

The **Minority Health Coalition of Elkhart County** in **Elkhart** will host a skating event for youth to come together, take a stand against tobacco and pledge to be tobacco-free. Time: 4:30 PM. Location: Holiday Skate Center, 28736 County Road 20, Elkhart. Contact: Velishea Billings (574) 226-5400.

The **Healthy Communities of LaPorte County** in collaboration with **Slicer Support Services at LaPorte High School** in **La Porte** will hang up a multitude of tobacco statistics and figures around the school, have students sign a #BeTheFirst pledge banner and participate in giveaways and carnival games during lunch. Time: 10:40 AM. Location: LaPorte High School, 602 F Street, La Porte. Contact: Sarah Null (219) 380-8642.

The **Boys & Girls Club of Boone County** in **Zionsville** will display a banner with truths about Big Tobacco, where youth and parents can dip their hands in glow paint and pledge to be tobacco-free. Time: 4:30 PM. Location: Boys & Girls Club of Boone County-Zionsville Unit, 1575 Mulberry Street, Zionsville. Contact: Glenn Sanford (317) 945-5679.

Students from **Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI)** in **Indianapolis** will come together to clean up the cigarette butts that litter campus to bring awareness to the pervasiveness of smoking. Time: 11 AM. Location: IUPUI Taylor Courtyard, 420 University Boulevard, Indianapolis. Contact: Seairah Delaney (812) 360-2004.

The **Boys & Girls Clubs of Wayne County** in **Richmond** will host a carnival where members can sign a #BeTheFirst pledge banner, participate in activities to learn what is in a cigarette, what tar looks like, and joust out tobacco. Time: 4:00 PM. Location: Boys & Girls Clubs of Wayne County, 1717 S. L Street, Richmond. Contact: Jenny O'Brien (765) 962-6922.

Students from the **Kosciusko County Tobacco Free Coalition** and the **Baker Youth Club** in **Warsaw** will celebrate choosing a tobacco-free lifestyle by taking a #BeTheFirst pledge and participating in a game of Plinko. Time: 3:30 PM. Location: Baker Youth Club, 1401 E. Smith Street, Warsaw. Contact: Heidi Blake (574) 551-5663.

The **Dearborn County CASA Youth Ambassadors** in **Aurora** will set up informational booths about the dangers of smoking and the effect of cigarette waste on the environment with local resources, activities and giveaways. Time: 10 AM. Location: Dearborn County Clearinghouse Food Pantry, 411 George Street, Aurora. Contact: Amy Rose (812) 290-1580.

The **Youth Rise! Leadership** will pick up cigarette butts in **Frankfort**. The youth will create a display using the picked up butts to show the negative impacts on the community's environment and advocate for a higher tobacco tax and a smoke-free air ordinance. Time: 4 PM. Location: TPA Park, 1 Adrian Marks Drive, Frankfort. Contact: Emily Bossung (219) 869-1304.

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

