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## **Michigan 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 Michigan 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 Michigan, 14.8 percent of high school students use e-cigarettes, while 10.5 percent smoke cigarettes. Tobacco use claims 16,200 lives in Michigan and costs the state \$4.6 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.

In Michigan, youth advocates are urging state lawmakers to pass legislation to raise the tobacco sale age to 21. **Hillsdale & Branch County Youth Engaged in Prevention** will join forces with **Teens Against Tobacco Use Grand Rapids** at the State Capitol building in **Lansing** to speak out against tobacco with a focus on raising the tobacco age. They will wear matching t-shirts, display banners on the Capitol steps and present to legislators. (Time: 12 PM. Location: Michigan State Capitol Rotunda, 100 N. Capitol Avenue, Lansing. Contact: Kelley Mapes (517) 279-9561 ext.103 or Libby Stern (616) 486-6503.)

“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 Michigan, additional events and activities include:

On March 19, Students at **Union City High School** in **Union City** will create informative posters that describe the dangers of using tobacco or tobacco-related products. Time: 8 AM. Location: Union City High School, 430 St. Joseph Street, Union City. Contact: Richard Maples (517) 568-3497.

Students at **White Cloud High School** in **White Cloud** will create a visual tombstone display on lockers to highlight the deadly effects of cigarettes, decorate the stairs with tobacco statistics and take part in a selfie campaign to show Big Tobacco that teens are “not a replacement” for traditional smokers. Time: 11:45 AM. Location: White Cloud High School, 555 E. Wilcox Avenue, White Cloud. Contact: Caitlin Schucker (231) 206-4616.

Students on the Teen Advisory Council at **Arthur Hill High School**, in collaboration with **Great Lakes Bay Health Centers** in **Saginaw**, will educate their classmates on tobacco’s toll by creating a mysterious display of tobacco statistics and facts on “dots” hung throughout the school. Time: 10 AM. Location: 3115 Mackinaw Street, Saginaw. Contact: Rachael Muex (989) 907-2728.

The **University of Michigan Smoke-free Ambassadors** in **Ann Arbor** will advocate to keep their campus air clean and their community healthy with their Kick Butts Day event. Ambassadors will chalk sidewalks with information on the harms associated with cigarette and tobacco use and remind students that the university is a "Clean-air Campus." Additionally, students and staff will participate in "Butt Clean-ups" in hot spots around campus. Time: 2 PM. Location: University of Michigan - Central Campus, 500 S. State, Ann Arbor. Contact: Jason Golec (248) 259-0525.

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