

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 15, 2019

CONTACTS: Gwendolyn Tom, (202) 868-4831

Boot Bullwinkle, (202) 481-9343

Minnesota 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 Minnesota 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 Minnesota, 19.2 percent of high school students use e-cigarettes, while 9.6 percent smoke cigarettes. Tobacco use claims 5,900 lives in Minnesota and costs the state over \$2.5 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 Minnesota, youth advocates are supporting state and local efforts to raise the tobacco age to 21 and ban flavored tobacco products.

“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 Minnesota, activities include:

Students at **Lancaster Public School** in **Lancaster** will hold a zombie walk, relay race, poster contest and pledge wall signing to take a stand against the dangers of tobacco use. Time: 8 AM. Location: Lancaster Public School, 401 Central Avenue, Lancaster. Contact: Sandie Nelson (218) 762-5400.

Morrison County Public Health and **Stand Up 4 U Coalition** will educate youth at Little Falls Community High School in **Little Falls** on the dangers of tobacco with Tobacco 101 Jeopardy and an e-cigarette ingredient activity. Students will sign a pledge wall to be tobacco-free and take selfies to show Big Tobacco they are #NotAReplacement. Time: 11:45 AM. Location: Little Falls Community High School, 1001 5th Avenue Southeast, Little Falls. Contact: Emily Loomis (320) 632-0375.

Students at **Metro Schools College Prep** in **Minneapolis** will promote a tobacco-free life by encouraging classmates to sign the #BeTheFirst Pledge Wall and write notes about their reasons for avoiding tobacco. Time: 1:15 PM. Location: Metro Schools College Prep, 620 Olson Memorial Highway, Minneapolis. Contact: Zahra Bashir (612) 300-7175.

In celebration of Kick Butts Day, HOSA-Future Health Professionals at **Andover High School** in **Andover** will create a body bag display to illustrate the dangers of tobacco, take selfies to show Big Tobacco they are #NotAReplacement and sign a pledge wall to commit to a tobacco-free lifestyle. Time: 11:40 AM. Location: 3949 South Enchanted Drive NW, Andover. Contact: Dan Cowan (612) 270-0922.

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

