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New Jersey 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 New Jersey 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 New Jersey, 9.6 percent of high school students use e-cigarettes, while 4.7 percent smoke cigarettes. Tobacco use claims 11,800 lives in New Jersey and costs the state over \$4 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 New Jersey, activities include:

Members of the **Trenton Health Team** in partnership with **Trenton Public Schools** in Trenton will display a healthy and non-healthy lungs demo and have students sign a pledge to be first tobacco-free generation. Time: 10:30 AM. Location: Trenton Central High School, Hanover Campus, 135 E. Hanover Street, Trenton. Contact: Elena Cromeyer (609) 888-6818.

Students from the **Cougar Pride Club** and the **Students Against Destructive Decisions** club in **Newton** will set up a #BeTheFirst pledge wall banner at the cafeteria for classmates to sign and pledge to be tobacco-free. Time: 10:30 AM. Location: Kittatinny Regional High School, 77 Halsey Road, Newton. Contact: Victoria Recenello (973) 383-1800 ext. 1560.

Members of the **Prevention Coalition of Mercer County** and **Lawrenceville High School Community in Action** in **Lawrenceville** will hold a lunch event to inform students about the toll of tobacco, with activities on the dangers of smoking, a pledge wall for students to sign to be tobacco-free, and information on smoking cessation. Time: 11:15 AM. Location: Lawrenceville High School, 2525 Princeton Pike, Lawrenceville. Contact: Malissa Arnold: (609) 610-1983.

On March 22, the **City of Paterson Municipal Alliance Prevention Program** in **Paterson** will hold a community event featuring a Tobacco Mad Scientist who will demonstrate how many chemicals are in cigarettes, discuss its effects on a sheep heart and lung, and lead a youth debate about tobacco and other games. Time: 5 PM. Location: Christopher Hope Community Center, 60 Temple Street, Paterson. Contact: Tenee Joyner (973) 747-6072.

On May 3, Youth with **The Creative Spirits of the State of New Jersey** in **East Orange** will help develop the script for and perform a skit to advocate against the tobacco industry's targeting youth. Time: 6 PM. Location: East Orange Fellowship Civic Center, 1 Fellowship Circle, East Orange. Contact: Jihadah Sharif (973) 766-1514.

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