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## **New Mexico 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 Mexico 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 Mexico, 24.7 percent of high school students use e-cigarettes, while 10.6 percent smoke cigarettes. Tobacco use claims 2,600 lives in New Mexico and costs the state \$844 million 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 New Mexico, youth advocates with Rescue – Evolvement are pushing for 24/7 smoke-free schools and ending tobacco sales to minors.

“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 Mexico, activities include:

On March 19, youth members of **Evolverment** at **Atrisco Heritage Academy High School** in **Albuquerque** will hang an “In My Lifetime Banner” during the school’s health fair and students will record their hopes, dreams, and bucket list ideas on a pledge wall to promote the message that staying healthy and tobacco-free is important to ensure all their dreams come true. Time: 9 AM. Location: 10800 Dennis Chavez Boulevard, Albuquerque. Contact: Ahlivia Mattocks (910) 389-4157.

In collaboration with the Pueblo of Acoma Taxation & Assessments Department, Acoma Behavioral Health Services Department, and the Pueblo of Acoma Education Department, **Haak’u Community Academy** in **Acoma Pueblo** will host a guest comedian who will present on tobacco awareness and cessation. Students will also engage in various educational activities to encourage a smoke-free environment. Time: 12:30 PM. Location: 25 Pinsbaari Drive, Acoma. Contact: Dionysia Pasquale (505) 389-5768.

**Cuba High School Evolverment** youth in **Cuba** will celebrate Kick Butts Day by committing to be tobacco-free and encouraging peers and loved ones to quit smoking. They will hang an “In My Lifetime Banner,” sign a pledge wall, and create photo pledges. Time: 12:24 PM. Location: 50 Country Road 13, Cuba. Contact: Ahlivia Mattocks (910) 389-4157.

Youth members of **Evolverment** at **Tucumcari Middle School** in **Tucumcari** will hang an “In My Lifetime Banner” and record their hopes, dreams, and bucket list ideas throughout the day. Students will also commit to be tobacco-free by constructing and signing a pledge wall and creating photo pledges. Time: 12:15 PM. Location: 1100 S. 7th Street, Tucumcari. Contact: Ahlivia Mattocks (910) 389-4157.

**Evolverment** youth at **V. Sue Cleveland High School** in **Rio Rancho** will record their hopes, dreams and bucket list ideas on an “In My Lifetime Banner.” They will also commit to promoting a smoke-free environment by constructing and signing a pledge wall and creating photo pledges. Time: 10:40 AM. Location: 4800 Laban Road N.E., Rio Rancho. Contact: Ahlivia Mattocks (910) 389-4157.

Students in the **Evolverment** group at **Hiroshi Miyamura High School** in **Gallup** will show their commitment to a smoke-free environment by recording their hopes for the future on an “In My Lifetime Banner.” They will also construct and sign a pledge wall and create photo pledges. Time: 11:09 AM. Location: 680 Boardman Avenue, Gallup. Contact: Ahlivia Mattocks (910) 389-4157.

All events will take place March 20 unless otherwise indicated. For a full list of Kick Butts Day activities in New Mexico, 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).