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North Carolina 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 North Carolina 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 North Carolina, 22.1 percent of high school students use e-cigarettes, while 12.1 percent smoke cigarettes. Tobacco use claims 14,200 lives in North Carolina and costs the state \$3.8 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 North Carolina, activities include:

Students from **Anson Early College High School** will partner with the **Anson County Health Department** to participate in Kick Butts Day by displaying tombstones on the front lawn of the health department and body bags on the front lawn of the high school to illustrate startling tobacco facts. Time: 9:30 AM. Location: 680 US-74, Polkton. Contact: Dinikia Savage (704) 994-3342.

Students from **Hibriten High School** in **Lenoir** will celebrate Kick Butts Day by signing a “Tobacco-Free Generation” pledge and displaying statistics around the high school to illustrate startling tobacco facts that affect youth. Time: 11 AM. Location: 1350 Panther Trail Drive, Lenoir. Contact: Jarma Stevens (828) 496-8650.

Students from **Pamlico County High School** in **Bayboro** will commit to be tobacco-free and to encourage their peers and loved ones to quit smoking by creating a video campaign to be shared throughout the school. Students are also constructing and signing a pledge wall. Time: 11 AM. Location: 601 Main Street, Bayboro. Contact: Lynn Hardison (252) 745-3151 ext. 555.

Students from **Lakers Education for Awesome Decisions (LEAD)** at **Mattamuskeet Early College High School** in **Swan Quarter** will celebrate Kick Butts Day with a tobacco prevention health fair. Teens will learn about the dangers of tobacco, the negative effects of vaping, and how to make healthier choices while participating in games and other activities. Time: 9:30 AM. Location: Mattamuskeet Early College High School, 20392 US Highway 264, Swan Quarter. Contact: Misty Gibbs (252) 926-4184.

Students at **John A. Holmes High School** will learn how to “Escape the Vape” at a schoolwide event to honor Kick Butts Day. Students in health science classes created posters that highlight the risks of vaping, which will be hung during the event. Wanda Stallings, Albemarle Regional Health Services Health Educator, Teresa Beardsley, Tobacco Prevention Manager, and Kia Boone, **East Carolina University** student intern, will share vape and tobacco cessation information with students during their lunch periods. They will have the opportunity to receive a shirt that says, “Aces Pride Kick Tobacco Aside,” along with vape-free wristbands and pencils. Time: 10:30 AM-1:00 PM. Location: 600 Woodward Street, Edenton. Contact: Teresa Beardsley (252) 340-0407.

On March 28, students at **South Johnston High School** in **Four Oaks** will partner with **Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA)** to hand out informational materials to teach their peers about the dangers of tobacco and e-cigarette use. The students are advocating to make their school a tobacco-free campus. Time: 11:25 AM. Location: 10381 US-301, Four Oaks. Contact: Shannon Massengill, (919) 793-1101.

On April 2, students at **Appalachian State University** will advocate for smoke-free and e-cigarette-free bus stops in Boone with a photography exhibit in the **Student Union Grandfather Ballroom**. The photos will illustrate students’ experiences being exposed to secondhand smoke and e-cigarette aerosols on

campus. Community members and policymakers are invited to attend the exhibit. Time: 12 PM.
Location: 263 Locust St, Boone. Contact: Christopher Seitz (828) 262-8907.

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

