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## **North Dakota 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 Dakota 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 Dakota, 20.6 percent of high school students use e-cigarettes, while 12.6 percent smoke cigarettes. Tobacco use claims 1,000 lives in North Dakota and costs the state \$326 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.

“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 Dakota, activities include:

Students from **Students Against Destructive Decisions! (SADD)** in **Fessenden** will commit to being tobacco-free, encourage **Fessenden-Bowdon Public School** students and loved ones to quit smoking by constructing, advocate for raising the tobacco tax, and sign a pledge wall. High school students will be bused to local convenience and grocery stores to view how Big Tobacco advertising targets youth. Time: 9:30 AM. Location: 500 2nd Street North, Fessenden. Contact: Lanae Strand (701) 547-3756.

Students from **Hazen Public School** will mark Kick Butts Day by committing to being tobacco-free, encouraging peers and loved ones to quit smoking, and signing a pledge wall. Time: 12:00 PM. Location: 519 1st Avenue Northeast, Hazen. Contact: Kris Krause (701) 748-2345.

Students at **Central Middle School** in **Devils Lake** will celebrate Kick Butts Day with Ciggy Butts, a mascot highlighting the dangers of tobacco use, during gym periods. Ciggy Butts will arrive with donations of educational, smoke-free material and sports equipment for the students to promote tobacco-free living. Time: 9:55 AM. Location: 325 7th Street, Devils Lake. Contact: Kim Homan (701)-350-1044.

**Students Against Destructive Decisions! (SADD)** members at **Century High School** in **Bismarck** will host Kahoots Trivia, an interactive knowledge bowl highlighting the dangers of tobacco use, to educate their fellow students. Time: 11:30 AM. Location: 1000 East Century Avenue, Bismarck. Contact: Linda Striebel (701) 323-4900.

**University of Mary** students in **Bismarck** will educate their peers on the dangers of tobacco—especially e-cigarettes—and encourage them and loved ones to quit smoking by constructing and signing a pledge wall to commit to being tobacco-free. Time: 11:15 AM. Location 7500 University Drive, Bismarck. Contact: Kyle Darras (701) 530-3670.

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

