



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CDC/FDA Show Seven of Ten Youth Using Tobacco Use Flavored Products

Statement by Robin Koval, CEO and President – Truth Initiative on New NYTS Results

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released two studies of youth tobacco use drawn from the 2014 National Youth Tobacco Survey in today's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR).

The data on flavored tobacco use carry a clear message for policymakers: the FDA has not gone far enough to protect American youth from the appeal of flavored tobacco. The data on frequency of use of an array of tobacco products also points to the need for FDA action based on how middle and high school students are using those products.

Regarding flavors, it is clear from the National Youth Tobacco Survey data for 2014 that flavors are a major factor in youth tobacco use: an estimated 3.26 million middle and high school students - 70.0 percent of all current youth tobacco users - had used at least one flavored tobacco product in the past 30 days. More than 60 percent of current tobacco users reported that their e-cigarette, hookah or cigar use involved a flavored product and more than half of current cigarette users reported using menthol cigarettes.

The FDA has the authority to ban production and marketing of menthol cigarettes but hasn't yet. And when the FDA "deeming regulations" that were supposed to be finalized this summer are done, the FDA will also have the authority to extend a flavor ban to products such as e-cigarettes, hookah, cigars and cigarillos. Today, those non-cigarette tobacco products come in a range of flavors that read like the contents of Jelly Belly's "Kids Mix" with flavors like Cherry, Apple, Blueberry, Chocolate, Piña Colada, Sour Apple, Watermelon, Key Lime Pie, Peach, Root Beer, Butterscotch, Cotton Candy and Bubblegum.

Common sense tells us these flavor choices are aimed at youth, and national studies demonstrate that youth and young adult tobacco users are more likely to use flavored products than adults, and younger adults are more likely to use flavored tobacco products than older adults. The data released today only underscore the urgency: while only, 24.5 percent of high school students reported using one or more tobacco products in the past 30 days, 17.9 percent reported use of at least one flavored product compared to 5.8 percent who reported using only non-flavored tobacco products. Flavor use was prevalent across tobacco product types, including e-cigarettes, hookah, cigars, menthol cigarettes and smokeless tobacco.

Put simply: the FDA needs to act quickly to follow the final deeming regulations with rules banning menthol and extending a prohibition on menthol and all flavors that appeal to youth to currently unregulated products such as e-cigarettes, hookah, cigars and cigarillos.

The data released today on frequency of use sheds light on the extent of middle and high school use of an array of tobacco products – meaning how often they are being used in surveys of past 30-day use. We see good news: less regular use across most products and most kids are not regular smokers. We have concerns: we still see lots of light and intermittent use. That’s consistent with other research that tells us middle and high school students don’t fully appreciate the dangers of such smoking, and it is the current focus of our truth® public education campaign. Our [latest ads](#) take on myths about “social” or “party” smoking as well as the dangerous misperception that flavored tobacco products are somehow less harmful. We also see room for action: The most chronic use is associated with entrenched products – cigarettes and smokeless tobacco – among middle schoolers and high schoolers. But the extent to which students who reported using tobacco during the past 30 days reported using more than one tobacco product speaks to why we need strong regulation of all products, not just cigarettes, and we need it right away.

If there is one key takeaway from both studies it would be this: the widespread use of flavored tobacco across all product categories and the widespread use of multiple tobacco products should bring new energy and attention to steps that the FDA can take right away to protect millions of American youth from tobacco-related death.

About Truth Initiative

*Truth Initiative is a national public health organization that is inspiring tobacco-free lives and building a culture where all youth and young adults reject tobacco. The truth about tobacco and the tobacco industry are at the heart of our proven-effective and nationally recognized **truth**® public education campaign, our rigorous and scientific research and policy studies, and our innovative community and youth engagement programs supporting populations at high risk of using tobacco. The Washington D.C.-based organization, formerly known as Legacy, was established and funded through the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement between attorneys general from 46 states, five U.S. territories and the tobacco industry. To learn more about our work speaking, seeking and spreading the truth about tobacco, visit truthinitiative.org.*

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