

truth[®] Confronts JUUL and Other E-cigarette Manufacturers in New Campaign, ‘Tested on Humans’

Doug the Pug, Other Animals Directly Urge JUUL: Don’t Use Humans as Test Subjects, Given How Little is Known About Products’ Long-term Effects

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Aug. 26, 2019) – Truth Initiative[®], through its highly effective **truth** youth smoking prevention campaign, is directly confronting the role JUUL and other e-cigarette manufacturers have played in fueling the youth vaping epidemic through a new campaign launching during the 2019 MTV Video Music Awards (VMAs) on Aug. 26. The campaign, titled “Tested on Humans,” highlights how little is known about the long-term effects of e-cigarettes which are still unregulated, exposing an entire generation to the risk of nicotine addiction and allowing them to be treated like human guinea pigs.

Just as humans speak out when companies test their products on animals, Tested on Humans features “King of Pop Culture” Doug the Pug and other animals speaking out in interactive broadcast and digital content to warn e-cigarette manufacturers like JUUL not to test a product with unknown effects on humans. Other famed pets will post their own protest pictures in the days following the VMAs using **truth** Instagram stickers to dress up in protest gear and the hashtag #DontTestOnHumans to show their support. The campaign aims to address misconceptions about e-cigarettes and give young people, whose e-cigarette use has sharply increased in just one year alone, the facts and information needed to make informed decisions about the products.

“JUUL and other e-cigarette manufacturers are targeting and recruiting a new generation, most of whom didn’t smoke prior, putting their future health at great risk and treating them like lab rats while becoming fat cats, raking in billions of dollars,” said Robin Koval, CEO and president of Truth Initiative, the national public health organization that directs and funds the **truth** campaign. “**truth** has a long history of calling out Big Tobacco for its deadly exploits, and Tested on Humans is the latest example which exposes just how little is known about the long-term health effects of e-cigarettes. Our message to JUUL and the entire tobacco industry remains clear: the safety and well-being of America’s youth is not for sale.”

Luka Kinard, a former teen vaper turned **truth** Finisher, meaning he enlisted with the campaign to share his story, hopes that it will inspire and help other young vapers looking to quit. He will also join Doug the Pug to share the Tested on Humans message throughout New York City the day of the awards show.

“I thought JUULing was safer, and even healthier, than other tobacco products. But really, I had no idea what I was putting in my body,” said Kinard. “It shouldn’t take having a seizure as a result of nicotine addiction like I had for teens to realize that these companies are taking advantage of what we don’t know.”

The Youth E-Cigarette Epidemic

Despite decades of progress in reducing youth cigarette smoking, rates of e-cigarette usage among high-school and middle-school-aged children have exploded. With a 78% increase in use among high school students¹ and a 48% increase among middle school students from 2017

¹ U.S. Food & Drug Administration. *FDA takes new steps to address epidemic of youth e-cigarette use, including a historic action against more than 1,300 retailers and 5 major manufacturers for their roles perpetuating youth access.* <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-takes-new-steps-address-epidemic-youth-e-cigarette-use-including-historic-action-against-more>

to 2018,² the U.S. surgeon general has officially recognized youth vaping as a widespread epidemic.³

While e-cigarettes could play a role in helping some adults quit smoking completely, few adult users use vaping for that purpose.⁴ Additionally, Truth Initiative research shows that teens are 16 times more likely to use these products than adults ages 25-34.⁵ Research also shows that young people who vape are four times more likely to start smoking traditional cigarettes.⁶ These products' increasing popularity with teens, along with their influence on teen smoking, is on track to addict a new generation of non-smokers to nicotine.

Tested on Humans comes on the heels of a July congressional hearing about the role of the most popular e-cigarette manufacturer, JUUL, in the youth vaping epidemic.⁷ The hearing highlighted JUUL's failure to submit its products to the independent, clinical testing needed to clearly understand the products' long term effects.⁸ JUUL, which is partially owned by Big Tobacco company Altria, has also claimed that its popularity among youth is unintentional, yet, past actions, including advertising with young, trendy models and creating youth-friendly flavors, suggest otherwise, pointing to the company's leading role in fueling the youth vaping epidemic.⁹ Though JUUL claims it has taken steps to prevent youth from using its products, it continues to mount aggressive lobbying efforts countering proposed measures that could more effectively protect young people from the unknown effects of e-cigarettes¹⁰.

"We know more about what's in a bag of potato chips than what's in an e-cigarette. Not only does the Food and Drug Administration need to step up and do its job to stop this growing epidemic, but the e-cigarette industry must comply with the regulatory process that every other food and drug goes through instead of fighting it at every turn," said Koval.

Tested on Humans builds on one of the first national public education campaigns on e-cigarettes, called "Safer ≠ Safe," which was launched by **truth** to give teens facts about e-cigarettes. In January 2019, **truth** also debuted a first-of-its-kind text messaging program based on youth input called This is Quitting, which offers free, anonymous resources for young people who want to quit vaping.

Get Involved

Those who want to help their pet join the protest encouraged to share their pet's picture with **truth** Instagram stickers and the hashtag #DontTestOnHumans. Every post offers pets — and their humans — the chance to win free human testing protest merchandise from **truth**.

² U.S. Food & Drug Administration. 2018 NYTS Data: A Startling Rise in Youth E-cigarette Use. <https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/youth-and-tobacco/2018-nyts-data-startling-rise-youth-e-cigarette-use>

³ Office of the Surgeon General. Surgeon General's Advisory on E-cigarette Use Among Youth. <https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/surgeon-generals-advisory-on-e-cigarette-use-among-youth-2018.pdf>

⁴ Truth Initiative. Few adults start using JUUL to quit smoking, new study finds. <https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/emerging-tobacco-products/few-adults-start-using-juul-quit-smoking-new-study>

⁵ Truth Initiative. Teens are 16 times more likely to use JUUL than older age groups. <https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/emerging-tobacco-products/teens-are-16-times-more-likely-use-juul-older-age>

⁶ Rand Corporation. Youth Who Use Vaping Products Are More Likely to Smoke Cigarettes, Increase Use of Both Over Time. <https://www.rand.org/news/press/2018/10/02.html>

⁷ Truth Initiative. Behind the explosive growth of JUUL. <https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/emerging-tobacco-products/behind-explosive-growth-juul>.

⁸ Truth Initiative. 5 takeaways from the congressional hearings on JUUL and the youth e-cigarette epidemic. <https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/emerging-tobacco-products/5-takeaways-congressional-hearings-juul-and-youth-e>

⁹ Truth Initiative. JUUL keeps saying its popularity with young people is an accident. <https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/emerging-tobacco-products/juul-keeps-saying-its-popularity-young-people-accident>

¹⁰ Sheila Kaplan, The New York Times. In Washington, JUUL Vows to Curb Youth Vaping. Its Lobbying in States Runs Counter to That Pledge. <https://www.parentsagainstvaping.org/news/2019/5/6/teens-say-they-dont-vape-they-juul-making-e-cigarette-use-hard-to-track-e6hzc>

For more information on e-cigarettes, visit thetruth.com. For help with quitting vaping, visit thetruth.com/quit or text “DITCHJUUL” to 88709 for free resources.

About truth

truth is one of the largest and most successful youth smoking prevention campaigns. The campaign exposes the tactics of the tobacco industry, the truth about addiction and the health effects and social consequences of smoking. **truth** gives teens facts to make their own informed choices about tobacco use and inspires them to use their creativity in the fight against tobacco. The campaign is credited with preventing hundreds of thousands of teens from starting to smoke and is empowering this generation to end smoking for good. To learn more, visit thetruth.com. **truth** is part of Truth Initiative, a national public health organization dedicated to achieving a culture where all youth and young adults reject tobacco. To learn more about Truth Initiative, visit truthinitiative.org.