
Multi-million-dollar JUUL settlement for igniting youth e-cigarette epidemic is an opportunity to accelerate progress to end youth vaping through proven-effective youth prevention education and quitting programs

Statement by Robin Koval, CEO and President of Truth Initiative

WASHINGTON, D.C. (September 8, 2022) – Truth Initiative applauds the actions of the state attorneys general of 34 states and territories, which if finalized, will result in JUUL, owned in part by tobacco giant Altria, being held financially accountable for igniting the ongoing youth e-cigarette epidemic via their aggressive, youth targeted marketing of its high-nicotine products. While the details of the proposed settlement are not yet public, it is critically important for the nearly \$440 million in settlement funds to be spent to address the youth vaping and nicotine addiction epidemic left in JUUL’s wake and which continues to threaten the physical and mental health of young people nationwide. What is urgently needed are the kind of evidence proven, cost effective prevention, education and cessation programs that have become the hallmark of Truth Initiative.

A previous historic settlement, the landmark 1998 Master Settlement Agreement, while fraught with challenges, clearly demonstrates the importance of dedicating centralized funds to successfully reverse youth tobacco and nicotine use. Truth Initiative (formerly known as American Legacy Foundation) exists because of this landmark settlement and the wise decision by the state attorneys general to fund and create an independent organization devoted to youth tobacco prevention. For decades, Truth Initiative has played an undisputed role in the decline of youth smoking and today is making similar progress on the youth vaping front with mass public education programs, school curriculums, and the nation’s largest youth and young adult vaping cessation program.

The nationally recognized **truth**[®] prevention and education campaign has prevented millions of young people from becoming smokers and was instrumental in driving down the youth smoking rate from 23% in 2000 to now just 2.3%. Peer-reviewed research proved the **truth** campaign is cost effective, saving \$3.072 billion between 2014 and 2019 alone. Today, that same evidence base is being built for **truth** prevention and cessation programs. A 2021 study published in [Tobacco Prevention](#) shows that strong **truth** brand awareness is significantly associated with increases in anti-vaping knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs. Further research shows **truth** brand awareness is associated with lower odds of both current e-cigarette use and intention to vape in the future.



Accelerating this progress with proven programs and products is vital, as hundreds of JUUL copycat products have entered the market, including disposable e-cigarettes whose market share doubled in just 10 months from August 2019 to May 2020. Nicotine in any form [is dangerous for young people](#) – it both harms developing brains and can negatively affect mental health by worsening symptoms of anxiety and depression. Time is of the essence to implement not only evidence-based prevention programs but quitting programs designed specifically for youth. This is Quitting from **truth**, a first-of-its-kind, free and anonymous quit vaping text message program, is already helping nearly 500,000 youth and young adults on their quit journeys to live nicotine-free lives. A randomized clinical trial published in [JAMA Internal Medicine](#) found that it increased quit rates among young adults aged 18-24 by nearly 40% compared to a control group. The **truth** brand has also been extended on the community level with a digital, peer-to-peer middle/high-school curriculum *Vaping: Know the truth* which is educating students on the risks of e-cigarette use and helping those already vaping to quit. Since its launch in November 2020, nearly 500,000 high school and middle students are actively engaged in the free course offered nationwide.

By delivering the facts about the health effects and social consequences of smoking, vaping, and nicotine use and the marketing tactics of the tobacco industry, **truth** helps young people make informed choices and influence others to do the same.

With this imminent major victory against JUUL, there is a tremendous opportunity to accelerate and amplify successes like these through the deployment of programs that work. We are at the ready to help the settling states and the young people living in them to live healthier tobacco and nicotine-free lives.

About Truth Initiative®

Truth Initiative is a national public health organization dedicated to achieving a culture where all young people reject smoking, vaping and nicotine and a future where tobacco and nicotine addiction are a thing of the past. In 2020, we celebrated 20 years of saving lives and preventing millions of youth from smoking. Our impact has helped drive the teen smoking rate down from 23% in 2000 to under 3% in 2021. The truth about tobacco and the tobacco industry are at the heart of our proven-effective and nationally recognized **truth®** public education campaign. As youth e-cigarette use threatens to addict a new generation to nicotine, we are leading the fight against tobacco and nicotine



addiction in all forms. Our rigorous scientific research and policy studies, community and youth engagement programs supporting populations at high risk of using tobacco, and innovation in tobacco dependence treatment are also helping to end one of the most critical public health battles of our time. Based in Washington D.C., our organization, formerly known as the American Legacy Foundation, 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, visit truthinitiative.org.

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