
Truth Initiative Report Finds Rapidly Evolving Nicotine Market Outpacing Regulation, Putting Youth at Risk

Surge in “smart” vapes, nicotine pouches, potent disposable e-cigarettes underscores need for tobacco prevention funding, quit support, and policy enforcement

WASHINGTON, D.C. (January 6, 2026) — Data released today in a new report from Truth Initiative, *Monitoring a Changing Tobacco Product Market in the United States*, show that the tobacco industry continues to aggressively target young people by manufacturing and marketing products that appeal to young people, including high-tech “smart” vapes, flavored oral nicotine pouches, and disposable e-cigarettes. Many of these products contain higher amounts of nicotine and come in appealing fruity flavors and are offered at cheaper and more accessible prices. Youth are using them with alarming frequency, reflecting signs of dependence. These data, taken with recent cuts made to U.S. tobacco prevention and cessation resources, illustrate the threat to reverse hard-won progress in youth and young adult nicotine prevention, but also the increased risk for addiction among young people.

Data from [the report](#) show:

- **High-tech “smart” vapes have become top-selling products:** About one-third of both youth (32%) and young adults (33%) who currently use e-cigarettes reported using “smart” vapes with screens, games, or Bluetooth connectivity in the past month. Geek Bar and Raz, two of the top 5 brands, now also have top-selling products with “smart” features, demonstrating how the tobacco industry is continuing to reel in new young customers with products that gamify nicotine use and are available in a wide range of flavors, at relatively low prices.
- **Nicotine pouch sales are increasing more rapidly than any other tobacco or nicotine product category in the United States:** Oral nicotine pouches — like Zyn, Velo and On! — are now the most rapidly expanding tobacco or nicotine product category, with sales nearly tripling from \$145 million to \$404 million between January 2023 and December 2024. Nearly all pouch products are flavored.



- **Flavored products continue to drive youth use:** Nearly all young people who reported current e-cigarette use (97.7% of youth ages 13–17 and 95.5% of young adults ages 18–27) reported using flavored e-cigarettes in the past 30 days. Flavors like fruit, sweets, mint, and menthol made up 93.2% of disposable e-cigarette sales. Flavored, disposable e-cigarettes remain the clear market leader, accounting for 93% of the more than 7,000 items available by the end of 2024. However, only four disposable e-cigarette products have been authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
- **Disposable e-cigarettes offer more nicotine, and appealing flavors, at a cheaper price:** E-cigarette volume and total nicotine content have increased, largely due to the enlarged capacity of disposable e-cigarettes. From February 2020 to June 2024, the total amount of nicotine sold in e-cigarettes surged by 249%, even as unit sales declined — the result of rising nicotine concentrations and larger device sizes.
- **Troubling signs of nicotine dependence emerge:** While youth e-cigarette use has declined in recent years, youth and young adults who use e-cigarettes are using them more frequently. Among youth who vape, nearly 40% report using e-cigarettes on 20 or more days each month, and one in four picks up their device more than 20 times a day on the days they vape. Among young adults who vape, over half report vaping 20 or more days a month. Over half of youth (53.2%) and young adults (62.1%) who currently used e-cigarettes reported wanting to use their e-cigarette within an hour of waking.
- **Co-use of multiple tobacco or nicotine products is also on the rise:** Findings indicated that nearly half of youth (45.5%) and more than half of young adults (52.6%) who reported past-month e-cigarette use reported that they used at least one additional tobacco product, such as cigarettes, cigars, or nicotine pouches. Co-use has the potential to expose young people to higher amounts of nicotine and toxic constituents.

Illegal Products in the Market:



The majority of e-cigarettes are illegal and lack FDA authorization. The proliferation of these flavored, high-nicotine products and low-cost, tech-enhanced devices threatens to hook new young people and deepen nicotine dependence among those who use such products. Urgent action is needed to eliminate illegal products from the marketplace. In addition, to further protect young people from nicotine addiction, there is a critical need to limit the appeal and availability of e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches.

Regulation and Enforcement:

“The retail landscape is evolving faster than regulation can,” said Kathy Crosby, CEO and President of Truth Initiative. “Illegally sold, flavored disposable e-cigarettes, smart vapes, and oral nicotine pouches are putting young people at risk of a lifetime of nicotine addiction. Federal agencies must step up enforcement, and retailers must be held accountable when they sell unauthorized products. Without stronger oversight at every level, young people will continue to be exposed to products engineered to keep them hooked.”

In addition to underscoring the need for continued federal regulation to eliminate illegal and flavored nicotine products, the report highlights state and local efforts to enforce sales restrictions and educate retailers to protect youth from nicotine addiction. This report also outlines promising [results from California’s statewide flavored tobacco sales restriction](#), which was linked to a 37% reduction in total milligrams of e-cigarette nicotine sold and 10.6% fewer cigarette packs sold. Yet only about 15% of Americans live in areas with strong restrictions on flavored tobacco sales.

Recent cuts to U.S. tobacco prevention and cessation efforts mark a significant challenge at a critical moment in public health. Combined with the findings in this report, these reductions in resources highlight the urgent need for coordinated national action and expanded local efforts to strengthen enforcement and build on lessons learned from statewide policies like California’s.

Expanded Quit Resources:

With troubling levels of dependence and co-use of products, the data also point to the critical need for free, accessible, evidence-based quitting support tailored to young people — especially as many look to break their nicotine addiction with the start of the new year.

“As millions of Americans, including young people, resolve to quit smoking or vaping at the start of a new year, these data serve as a reminder that young



people are navigating a nicotine marketplace that continues to aggressively target them,” added Crosby. “Quitting has never been more urgent. Youth and young adults deserve tools that help them live free from nicotine addiction.”

[EX Program](#) from Truth Initiative, developed with Mayo Clinic, offers personalized guidance, coaching, text messages, and proven behavioral tools that can increase the odds of quitting by up to 40%, ensuring young people have the support they need to build healthier futures.

About the Report

Monitoring a Changing Tobacco Product Market in the United States utilizes national retail sales data and data from Wave 5 of the TEEN+ Study, analyzed by the CDC Foundation in collaboration with Truth Initiative. The report examines e-cigarette and oral nicotine pouch sales across major retail channels from January 2019 through December 2024 and TEEN+ Wave 5 survey data from August 2024 through December 2024. The report also describes the impact of state-level flavored tobacco restrictions, including California’s statewide policy. Data are collected and analyzed to inform public health policies aimed at preventing nicotine addiction among youth and young adults.

About Truth Initiative

Truth Initiative® is a national nonprofit public health organization committed to a future free from lifelong addiction, fostering healthier lives and a more resilient nation. Our mission is to prevent youth and young adult nicotine addiction and empower quitting for all. Through our evidence-based, market-leading cessation intervention, [EX® Program](#), and national public education campaigns, we lead the fight against youth and young adult tobacco use. Learn more at truthinitiative.org.

About EX Program

EX® Program is a proven-effective tobacco cessation program, developed by Truth Initiative® with Mayo Clinic, that brings together the best evidence-based quitting approaches, interactive digital quitting programs, and the most established online quit community. EX Program has helped millions of youth and adults develop the skills and confidence to successfully quit. Truth Initiative research has shown that EX Program text messages can increase a user’s odds of quitting by up to 40%. To learn more, visit exprogram.com.

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