truth initiative
freedom from nicotine addiction

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Truth Initiative Applauds Action by New Mexico to Protect Young People from Illegal Vaping Products

Statement of Kathy Crosby, CEO and President, Truth Initiative

WASHINGTON, D.C. (March 31, 2026) — New Mexico Attorney General Raúl Torrez's crackdown on illegal vaping products is a strong move that reflects a firm commitment to protecting youth and young adults from a lifetime of nicotine addiction. The attorney general on Tuesday announced a lawsuit against several distributors and retailers under the state's Unfair Practices Act.

E-cigarettes have remained the most commonly used tobacco product among youth for more than a decade, and educators report that vaping is a daily issue that significantly disrupts student learning and academic progress. 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. Additionally, Truth Initiative data indicate that 76% of teens who vape use their device within 30 minutes of waking, a key sign of growing nicotine dependence.

There also has been a significant increase in dual and polyuse of tobacco and nicotine products among young people aged 15–24 years (with dual use of e-cigarettes and combustible tobacco products being the most prevalent), potentially exposing youth and young adults to increased negative health effects.

While some parents and policymakers across the country may be more concerned about other substances and behaviors, there's clear evidence that nicotine use — often one of the first substances used by young people —may put them at higher risk for addiction to other substances and could open them up to riskier behaviors in the future. For example, research also shows that adolescents who have used e-cigarettes are significantly more likely to report cannabis use in the future compared with those who have not used e-cigarettes.

Even on its own, nicotine can harm developing brains, and addiction to nicotine can also amplify feelings of anxiety, depression, and stress — a particular concern for youth already struggling with mental health issues.

Concerningly, most e-cigarettes are on the market illegally, made with untested ingredients, and alarmingly easy for youth to access. These products are sold in

stores, passed among peers, or shipped directly to homes through online platforms that often skip ID checks. They're cheaper, more potent, and more accessible than ever — wrapped in kid-friendly flavors and packaging designed to attract young users. Some even mimic everyday items or feature screens that play games like Pac-Man and Tetris.

Access to quitting support also has never been more urgent, especially for young people. On average, between 2,000 and 3,000 young people ages 13-24 enroll in EX Program each week, the majority of whom want to quit vaping.

By cracking down on the easy access to these harmful products at the distributor and retailer level, Attorney General Torrez and the state of New Mexico are demonstrating clear leadership in tackling this urgent issue threatening the health of young people. Truth Initiative applauds and supports these decisive legal measures and remains committed to protecting youth and helping those struggling with nicotine addiction through EX Program.

This action by New Mexico builds on those from other state attorneys general, reinforcing that states are stepping up to fill in where federal oversight and enforcement have fallen short. These collective efforts send a powerful message: those that profit from illegal products will be held accountable. It is clear that more must be done, particularly at the federal level, to cut off access to illegal e-cigarettes and ensure these products are not manufactured or distributed and that retailers pull these products from their store shelves.

About Truth Initiative

Truth Initiative® is a national nonprofit public health organization committed to a future free from lifelong nicotine 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 on their journey to quit nicotine. Truth Initiative research has shown that EX Program can increase a user's odds of quitting by up to 40%. To learn more, visit exprogram.com.

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