
FDA Authorization of Age-Gated, Flavored E-Cigarette Products is Key Test Case in Balancing Availability for Adult Smokers While Protecting Youth

Statement of Kathy Crosby, CEO and President, Truth Initiative

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 5, 2026) — The U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s [authorization](#) of flavored (non-tobacco and non-menthol) e-cigarette products with technological features intended to prevent underage use will be a key test case in whether availability of such products coupled with marketing restrictions can limit youth use. This is particularly important in a marketplace where illegal, youth-appealing flavored products remain widely available.

The FDA has a responsibility to ensure that products meet a rigorous public health standard that considers both the potential benefit for adults who smoke and the risks to youth. With these products now authorized, the agency must closely monitor how they are marketed and used to confirm that they continue to meet that high bar—and take swift action if they don’t.

This moment calls for a balanced approach grounded in public health. Providing adults who smoke with access to FDA-authorized alternatives to combustible cigarettes and preventing youth nicotine addiction are shared responsibilities—not tradeoffs. With more than 25 million U.S. adults who still smoke, there’s a clear need to provide an off-ramp from cigarettes on the journey to complete cessation. At the same time, we cannot allow new products to become an on-ramp for young people.

Despite recent progress in reducing youth nicotine vaping, the [2025 Monitoring the Future Survey](#) indicates that use has remained flat, which means our collective work that helped drive these rates down is far from finished.

Nicotine can harm developing brains, and nicotine addiction can also amplify feelings of anxiety, depression, and stress — a particular concern for youth already struggling with mental health issues. Use of nicotine — often one of the first substances used by young people — may also put youth at higher risk for addiction to other substances and could open them up to riskier behaviors in the future.

Young people are using e-cigarettes with [alarming frequency](#), reflecting signs of dependence, and are often [using multiple tobacco or nicotine products](#) at the same time, including e-cigarettes, cigarettes and oral nicotine pouches like Zyn.



Companies continue to [aggressively target young people](#) with illegal, youth-appealing products, including high-tech “smart” vapes and disposable e-cigarettes. Many of these products contain higher amounts of nicotine, come in appealing fruity flavors and are offered at cheaper prices. We must get control of the illegal marketplace to make space for FDA-authorized products to succeed in transitioning adults completely away from cigarettes without increasing youth use.

Ultimately, it’s critical that we remain vigilant in protecting young people, including closely monitoring the use of authorized products, increasing enforcement against popular illegal products and continuing to provide access to free quit resources such as Truth Initiative’s [EX Program](#).

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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