truth initiative
freedom from nicotine addiction

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FDA Authorization of Flavored Nicotine Pouches Underscores Need to Protect Youth While Providing Lower-Risk Alternatives for Adults Who Smoke

Statement from Kathy Crosby, CEO and President of Truth Initiative

WASHINGTON, D.C. (October 30, 2026) – The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's authorization of 24 flavored Velo nicotine pouch products underscores the importance of protecting young people from nicotine addiction while ensuring that adults who smoke have access to scientifically evaluated, FDA authorized alternatives to combustible cigarettes. Both objectives are essential to a public health approach grounded in rigorous science, strong regulatory oversight, and meaningful enforcement.

The authorization of flavored nicotine products, including fruit and sweet flavors, raises important questions and concerns about youth appeal and initiation. Nicotine is highly addictive and can harm developing brains. The FDA must closely monitor how these products are marketed, who is using them, and whether they are helping adults move away from cigarettes without increasing nicotine use among young people and those who do not currently use nicotine.

With millions of Americans still smoking cigarettes, the leading cause of preventable disease and death, there is a clear need for alternatives that can help adults move away from combustible tobacco. While complete cessation of tobacco and nicotine remains the goal, FDA-authorized alternatives may play an important role along the quit journey for adults who smoke. The FDA's finding that these products contain substantially lower levels of harmful constituents than cigarettes and smokeless tobacco is encouraging. While child-resistant packaging is an important safeguard against accidental nicotine exposure and poisoning among young children, it does not address the broader risks of nicotine initiation and addiction among adolescents. Lower exposure to harmful chemicals also does not mean these products are risk-free, and their potential benefits depend on adults switching completely from more harmful tobacco products.

These authorizations also reinforce the importance of maintaining a rigorous scientific review process for all new tobacco products. Improvements in review efficiency must not come at the expense of the evidence needed to determine whether products meet the public health standard. Equally important, the FDA must take meaningful action against the widespread availability of unauthorized nicotine products that continue to undermine public health protections.

Protecting young people from nicotine addiction and providing adults who smoke with access to lower-risk alternatives are not competing priorities. A strong, science-based regulatory system must accomplish both.

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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