

E-cigarettes Are Not Safe

SUBMITTED BY SAFE, INC.

Just when it appeared that many of our youth were deciding that cigarette smoking was not a good idea, a new form of smoking has now become available - electronic cigarettes, which are now considered "cool" among teens.

SAFE, Inc. is committed to educating Glen Cove youth and their parents regarding this new form of smoking and will continue to partner with the Tobacco Action Coalition of LI to drive home the fact that using e-cigarettes may lead to smoking conventional cigarettes and it is not safe.

"E-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive and a gateway to more traditional tobacco products," said Carol Meschkow, Nassau Coordinator for Tobacco Action Coalition of LI. "Parents and educators do need to be concerned about the tobacco industry's efforts to groom the next generation of smokers."

Battery-powered e-cigarettes are being openly used by celebrities, a signal to youth that they are cool and a safe alternative to traditional cigarettes which they are not.

The Bach-Harrison Prevention Needs Assessment Survey was given by SAFE, Inc. and administered by the Glen Cove School District to students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 in January 2012. The results of the survey found that although tobacco use is higher in the upper grades, it is lower than the national average. But there is still a need for parents to join in stressing how harmful cigarettes are, including e-cigarettes.

"Parents can take a number of effective actions to protect their children from starting to smoke or becoming another one of the tobacco industry's addicted customers and victims," said Dr. Sharon Harris, executive director SAFE Inc. "Studies consistently show that parental actions, attitudes, and opinions about smoking have a great deal of influence on whether or not their children smoke."

Parents can try the following to impress on their children the need to avoid cigarettes:

- Be open with them. When a parent knows their child may be going somewhere where there will

be smoking they should talk to them about how to deal with the situation.

- When parents are with children and they see an advertisement or a television show where someone is smoking they should open up a conversation about why it is harmful to smoke.

- Perhaps the hardest part for a parent is if they are smoking themselves or there is a relative who smokes. There's nothing wrong with saying that they regret starting smoking. Encourage the teen not to start.

Parents should also share the following short-term and long term effects of smoking with teens:

- Short-term effects of smoking include addiction to nicotine and exposure to other dangerous chemicals; higher likelihood of respiratory problems; shortness of breath; phlegm and a gross-sounding cough; impaired lung growth and function; bad breath, yellow teeth, and stained fingers.

- Long-term effects and risks of smoking include addiction to nicotine and exposure to other dangerous chemicals; lung, mouth, throat, kidney, and stomach cancers; coronary heart disease; emphysema and other chronic diseases; shorter

lifespan (up to 20 years shorter); foul-smelling clothes and hair

And tell teens to forget about even trying e-cigarettes.

"The recent rise in our youth's usage of e-cigarettes is a cause for alarm," Meschkow said. "Not only is it troubling that the product has not been studied for long-term health effects nor regulated by the FDA, but its presence on TV, etc. is counter productive to the restrictions on tobacco advertising we have seen in these venues since the successful outcome of the Master Settlement. Clearly, e-cigarettes with chemicals like diethylene glycol, an ingredient in antifreeze found in these product's cartridges, is not something we want our teens inhaling."

SAFE Inc. is committed to eliminating teen drug and alcohol use in Glen Cove. Through a combination of prevention, education, and law enforcement efforts, SAFE Inc. combats the devastating effects that can result from underage drinking and drug use in order to build a safer Glen Cove.

For more information regarding SAFE, Inc and the PRIDE Coalition, or to view SAFE Inc.'s Public Service Announcement, visit www.safeglen-cove.org.