

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: New Studies Finding a Link Between Youth Vaping and Mental Fog

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition and the Tobacco Action Coalition (TAC) of Long Island wanted to apprise the community of new studies where researchers claim they have found an association between vaping and mental fog (clouding of consciousness/unable to pay attention), which appears more likely among youth who began vaping before age 14.

Two recent studies from the University of Rochester Medical Centre (URMC) found that adults and youth who smoke and vape are more likely to report difficulties in mental functions such as memory, decision-making and concentrating. The studies examined more than 18,000 American youth, estimated to be between the ages of 11 and 18, who responded to the National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS). The Survey is an annual cross-sectional national survey administered to US high school and middle school students. NYTS has been conducted with pencil and paper since 1999, asking about tobacco-related beliefs, attitudes, behavior, and exposure to tobacco influences.

A stratified, three-stage cluster sampling design was used to generate a nationally representative sample of all US students from grade 6 to 12. 886,000 adults who responded to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Systems (BRFSS) were also studied. The Surveillance System is administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The BRFSS is an annual cross-sectional health-related telephone interview survey on health-related risk behaviors, chronic health conditions, and preventive service use among adults (18 years or older) in all 50 US states as well as the District of Columbia and three US territories. The participants were recruited using random digit dialing techniques on both landlines and cell phones.

The youth study found that students who started vaping between the ages of eight and 13 were more likely to report issues with mental fog than those who started vaping at 14 or older. The two studies do not conclude the exact link between mental function impairment and vaping, but researchers believe nicotine could play a role in causing this. Or it could mean that people who already have mental fog are more likely to smoke or vape, potentially as a way to self-medicate. Overall, research reveals that vaping is not a safe alternative to smoking and intervention should be introduced earlier than it already is.

Prevention programs that start in middle or high school might actually be too late. This suggestion is in keeping with the collaborative efforts of SAFE and TAC to drive their programming down to the elementary school level. According to Ms. Meschkow- Manager for TAC, with youth onset as early as the age of 13 she appreciates SAFE including them in efforts to help curb youth initiation by engaging their youth in the elementary school in age appropriate programming regarding the dangers of all tobacco products SAFE- Executive Director Dr. Harris employs environmental strategies along with technical support from TAC to bring enlightening programming to the districts youth while simultaneously keeping the parents informed, aware and involved.

Quitting smoking and vaping is even more crucial now during the COVID-19 pandemic. If you or a loved one would like more information on the impacts of tobacco and lung health, or would like Cessation/Quit help please contact the NYS Quitline at: 1-866-NY-QUITS or contact the Experts at the American Lung Association Helpline at: 1-800-586-4872.

SAFE, Inc. is the only alcohol and substance abuse prevention, intervention and education agency in the City of Glen Cove. Its Coalition is concerned about vaping and seeks to educate and update the community regarding its negative consequences. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit the Vaping Facts and Myths Page of SAFE's website to learn more about how vaping is detrimental to your health www.safeglencove.org.