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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: The Truth: Disposable E-Cigarettes Lead to Surge in Nicotine Sales

According to new research from the CDC Foundation and Truth Initiative, the e-cigarette market is increasingly dominated by disposable products that have gotten bigger and cheaper, delivering more nicotine at price points more accessible to young people. The total amount of nicotine sold jumped by 249.2% even though the number of e-cigarette units sold each month rose by only 34.7%, representing more than seven times the growth in unit sales.

Most of this surge came from disposable e-cigarettes, the device type that is most popular with youth. The amount of nicotine sold in disposables skyrocketed by 2,364.5%, compared to just a 1.3% increase for e-cigarettes that use prefilled cartridges. Disposable sales more than tripled (up 201.3%), while sales of cartridge-based e-cigarettes dropped by nearly 24%.

By mid-2024, the average disposable e-cigarette contained nine times more e-liquid than e-cigarettes with a prefilled cartridge. While disposable e-cigarettes made up 58.1% of all e-cigarette units sold, they accounted for a much larger share (74.0%) of total nicotine sold.

This research builds on a 2023 Truth Initiative study published in Tobacco Control that found disposable e-cigarettes sold in the U.S. nearly tripled in nicotine strength, quintupled in e-liquid capacity, and dropped in price by nearly 70% between 2017 and 2022.

Disposable e-cigarettes not only have more nicotine but also continue to be much cheaper: the price per milligram of nicotine is 3.7 times lower than in prefilled products. This trend is especially concerning for youth, who are more price-sensitive and may be more likely to use cheaper, high-nicotine products.

While most studies track e-cigarette sales using the number of products sold, this study tracks e-cigarette sales based on nicotine content – e-liquid volume and nicotine concentration – to measure the total amount of nicotine sold.

This method could help inform stronger policy and public health strategies to address the risks associated with increasingly potent and cheap nicotine products, particularly among young people.

SAFE, Inc. is the only alcohol and substance abuse prevention, intervention, and education agency in the City of Glen Cove. Its Coalition is concerned with all combustible and electronic products with tobacco. The Agency employs environmental strategies to educate and update the community regarding the negative consequences of smoking and vaping. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or to learn more about electronic products visit the Youth and Tobacco Use and Vaping Facts and Myths Pages of SAFE's website to learn more about how vaping is detrimental to your health at www.safeglencove.org.

The Truth Initiative is the nation's largest nonprofit public health organization dedicated to preventing youth and young adult nicotine addiction and empowering quitting. Research is conducted through the Truth Initiative Schroeder Institute that produces independent research to provide evidence for policy change and leadership in cessation research. For more information, please visit www.truthinitiative.org.