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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: The Truth About Online Platforms and Tobacco Promotion

Researchers at The Truth Initiative latest study on tobacco use and youth say exposure to tobacco promotion on TikTok, Twitch, and YouTube nearly triples odds of young people intending to vape or smoke cigarettes. This trend is unsurprising given that previous research has established that tobacco imagery in movies and TV shows, as well as content on social media, can drive young people to use tobacco and nicotine products.

Platforms where users generate and share content like YouTube, TikTok, and Twitch are the most popular media outlets for young people. About a third of young people surveyed recalled being exposed to promotional tobacco content on these platforms, creating yet another avenue for youth exposure to pro-tobacco content and underscoring an urgent need for policies to limit exposure.

Key takeaways from this study

- Tobacco content infiltrate user-generated content platforms. In this survey of 1,032 15-24-year-olds, many were exposed to promotion of tobacco products on TikTok (30%), YouTube (28.4%), and Twitch (22.4%).
- Tobacco imagery on YouTube, Twitch, and TikTok is common. More than one-third of study participants were exposed to tobacco use of any kind on these platforms. The highest exposure was reported on TikTok (41.4%), followed closely by YouTube (40.5%) and Twitch (34.0%)
- The higher the tobacco exposure, the greater the odds of intending to use tobacco products. Compared to those who were not exposed to tobacco content, those with high exposure had 196% higher odds of intending to vape and 119% higher odds of intending to smoke. Those with moderate exposure had 55% higher odds of intending to use e-cigarettes.

Findings are aligned with previous Truth Initiative research that found that young people with high exposure to tobacco imagery on popular streaming TV shows have about triple the odds of intending to smoke and vape. These findings expand on that research, showing a significant relationship between recalled exposure to promotional tobacco content on user-generated content platforms and intentions to vape and smoke cigarettes in the future.

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.

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 and the negative consequences of its advertising. 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.