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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: The Truth-Most E-Cigarettes on the Market are Illegal and Pose a Health Threat to Youth

According to The Truth Initiative, disposable e-cigarettes are currently the most commonly used nicotine product among young people. In 2025, 1.4 million students reported current e-cigarette use, and among youth e-cigarette users, 27.5% reported using e-cigarettes daily.

Unauthorized e-cigarettes, low in cost and high in nicotine concentration, are dominating the U.S. market and pose a significant threat to public health, especially for young people. As of August 2026, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has only authorized 48 e-cigarette products, including products from JUUL, NJOY, Vuse, and Glas Inc. The remaining e-cigarettes on the market, nearly all of which are flavored and disposable, are being sold illegally.

These disposable e-cigarettes have grown bigger in volume, stronger in nicotine concentration, and cheaper in price, making large amounts of nicotine accessible to price-sensitive youth. The amount of nicotine sold increased by 249.2% between 2020 and 2024, largely due to the increased size and strength of disposable devices.

The vast majority of illegal e-cigarettes are disposable, flavored, and available at low prices accessible to young people. In addition, many brands now include “smart” features such as digital screens, Bluetooth connection and games, which can attract young people and can keep users engaged.

Sales of disposable, illegal e-cigarettes are also driven by sweet, youth-appealing flavors. Between February 2020 and December 2024, disposable e-cigarette sales increased by 206.0% (4.1 million units to 12.5 million units), driven by fruit, candy, and dessert-flavored products, and nearly all young people who reported current e-cigarette use (97.7% of youth ages 13–17 and 95.5% of young adults ages 18–27) reported using a flavored product.

The premarket review process provides the FDA with an objective and systematic method to evaluate whether an e-cigarette product benefits public health and can be legally marketed in the United States. The FDA has denied permission to market many non-tobacco and non-menthol flavored e-cigarette products, especially those with youth-appealing flavors like menthol, fruit, and candy. However, many of those denials are currently under judicial or supervisory review.

Some brands that do not have FDA authorization but continue to be sold anyway include Elf Bar, Lost Mary, and Funky Republic.

In recent years, the FDA has increased enforcement efforts around e-cigarette manufacturers and retailers for continuing to sell youth-appealing e-cigarettes. These actions include issuing warning letters, civil money penalties, injunctions, and joint operations with other federal officials to seize imports of unauthorized e-cigarette products. However, Researchers say further action must be taken to eliminate all illegal products from the market. While some progress has been made to crack down on illegal products, there is an urgent need to protect young people by preventing illegal products from entering the U.S. market that risk furthering nicotine addiction and removing the illegal products currently on the shelves.

Actions to address unauthorized e-cigarette sales are crucial to protect the health of young people. Nicotine use can harm the developing brain and make young people more susceptible to addiction later in life, and nicotine addiction can increase stress and intensify symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Truth Initiative applauds actions taken to address sales of illegal e-cigarettes and urges all retailers to act swiftly and in compliance with the law to remove these products from the shelves and ensure a safer future for 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.