

Vaping Erases 15 Years of Progress Lowering Youth Tobacco Use

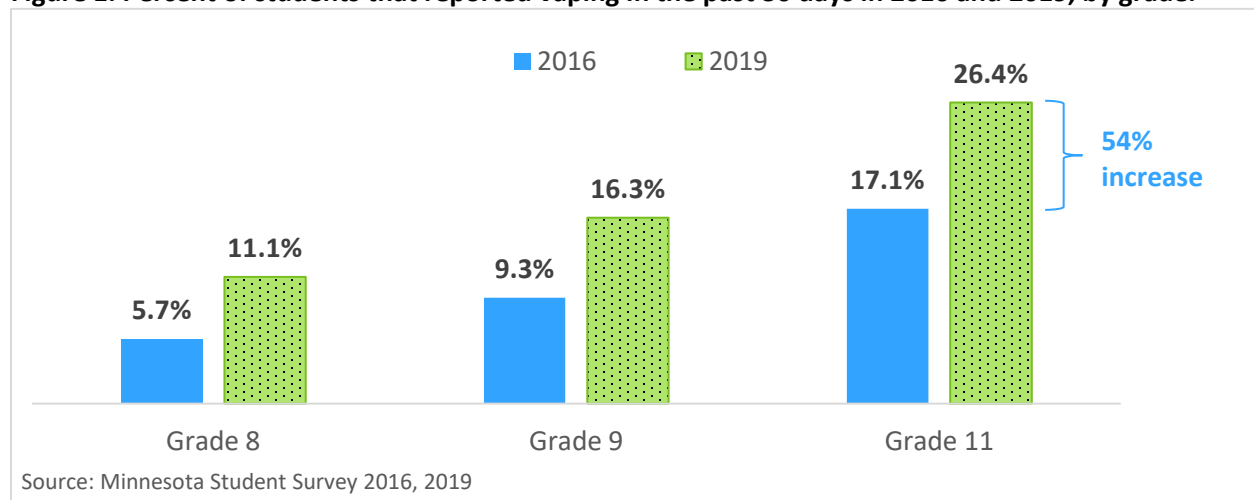
Minnesota has a long history of comprehensive tobacco control, which has led to a dramatic decline in smoking among teens. However, the rising popularity of e-cigarettes (often called vapes) threatens this success. E-cigarettes entered the U.S. market in 2007 and soon became popular with teens. Vaping products are a serious threat to the health of Minnesota’s youth, delivering cigarette-like levels of flavored nicotine to the user.



Youth vaping continues to rise

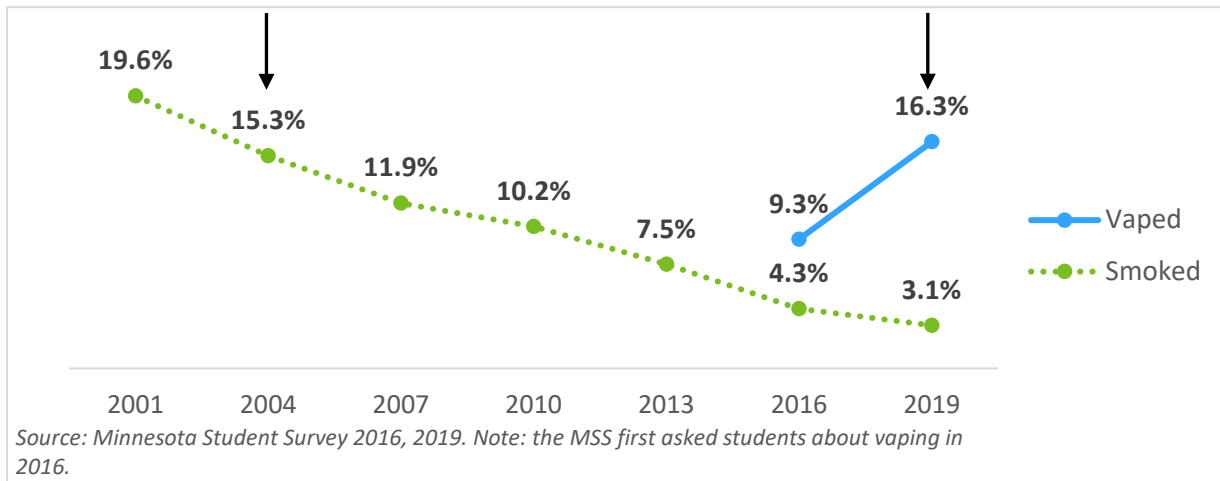
The latest Minnesota Student Survey revealed sharp increases in youth vaping (**Figure 1**). In 2019, one in four 11th grade students (26.4%) reported vaping in the past 30 days, a 54% increase since 2016. Vaping increased by 75% among 9th grade students, and 95% among 8th grade students.

Figure 1. Percent of students that reported vaping in the past 30 days in 2016 and 2019, by grade.



The Minnesota Student Survey has documented 9th grade students’ tobacco use for many years. **Figure 3** shows that smoking among 9th grade students (the green dotted line) declined considerably since 2001. In contrast, in just three years, vaping increased dramatically (the blue solid line) among 9th grade students. Indeed, the percentage who vaped in the past 30 days is nearly equal to the percentage who smoked cigarettes in 2004, essentially erasing 15 years of progress in lowering youth tobacco use.

Figure 2. Percent of 9th grade students that used a tobacco product (smoked cigarettes or vaped) in the past 30 days, by year.



We know what works

These alarming trends spurred action in Minnesota. Cities and counties across the state are working to reduce youth access to commercial tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and vapes. In 2017, Minnesota communities started raising the minimum legal sales age to buy tobacco products to 21. Since then, the policy has been enacted statewide and nationally. However, there is more work to do.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration prohibited production and sale of flavors other than tobacco or menthol in e-cigarette cartridges or “pods” in 2019, much more is needed to combat teen tobacco use in Minnesota. The good news is that we know what works, such as raising the price of commercial tobacco, increasing investments in commercial tobacco prevention and control, and prohibiting the sale of flavored commercial tobacco products, including menthol.

These policies are proven to reduce youth tobacco initiation and use and if enacted are expected to curb youth use that can be measurable in future surveys.

Learn more: www.health.mn.gov/ecigarettes

Minnesota Department of Health
 PO Box 64882
 St. Paul, MN 55164-0882
 651-201-3535
tobacco@state.mn.us
www.health.mn.gov/tobaccodata

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For questions or to request data, contact the Minnesota Center for Health Statistics.

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