

NEWS RELEASE

Panhandle

Public Health District

March 6, 2019

for immediate release.

For more information, contact: Chelsy Schneringer, 308-487-3600 ext. 104

E-Cigs & Youth: Harming Brain Development with Each Puff

Brain Awareness Week kicks off March 11

Have you seen your kid's USB flash drive lying around lately? It could be an electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) and contain nicotine.

Brain Awareness Week kicks off March 11 and Panhandle Public Health District wants to remind parents and youth that there is no safe amount of nicotine for youth. Because brain development happens until age 25, youth nicotine use can damage parts of the brain that control attention, learning, mood, and impulse control.

Across the country, youth e-cigarette use is on the rise, particularly among middle and high school students. In 2017, 9.4% of Nebraska youth reported using an e-cigarette in the last 30 days, surpassing the youth cigarette smoking rate of 7.4%.

“Part of the problem is that many youth don't realize that e-cigarettes contain nicotine and, without that knowledge of risk, the variety of fruit and candy flavors can seem very appealing,” said Tabi Prochazka, Deputy Director of Health Promotion and Preparedness. “The low emissions (vapor upon exhale) and discreet size make it difficult for parents to detect when their child is using e-cigarettes.”

Parents play a very important role in preventing continued growth of this public health threat. Parents can:

- Learn about the different types of e-cigarettes and risk of e-cigarette use for young people at <https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/>.
- Adopt tobacco-free rules, including e-cigarettes in their home and vehicle.
- Let their child know they want them to stay away from e-cigarettes because they are not safe. Seek help from healthcare providers and get involved.

“Setting an example for kids by being tobacco-free is another way to help prevent youth from starting,” concluded Prochazka. “If you use tobacco, it is never too late to quit.”

For Nebraskans over 18, looking for help quitting tobacco, call the Nebraska Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669). The Quitline is free and confidential, 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.

Panhandle Public Health District urges everyone to take part in raising awareness of the dangers of vaping and nicotine use. Resources providing more information can be found at:
<http://www.pphd.org/Pages/vaping.html>

Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety, and quality of life for all who live, learn, work and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle Community.