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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Capital District Tobacco Free Communities met with State Lawmakers at the Capitol; discussed the NYS Tobacco Control Program and Unmet Needs among Certain Communities**

*Nearly* ***40%*** *of 12th graders in NYS use e-cigarettes; New Yorkers with low education, low-income and reporting frequent mental distress smoke at higher rates than the state average*

**Message to Elected Officials: *Tobacco Control #SavesLivesSavesMoney***

ALBANY, N.Y. – Capital District Tobacco-Free Communities (CDTFC) and Reality Check (RC) youth were at the Capitol today, talking with lawmakers about the success of the state’s Tobacco Control Program at lowering the average smoking rate to 12.8%[[1]](#endnote-1) and about the unmet needs in tobacco control efforts, particularly among youth and certain communities. CDTFC and RC met with Assemblymembers and Senators representing Albany, Schenectady, and Rensselaer Counties.

During meetings, CDTFC stressed that cigarette smoking among high school youth statewide declined 82% between 2000 and 2018,[[2]](#endnote-2) but e-cigarette use by high schoolers continues to rise, now at **27%.****[[3]](#endnote-3)** In contrast, **only 3.8% of adult** New Yorkers use e-cigarettes.[[4]](#endnote-4) Additionally, nearly **40%** of *12th graders* use e-cigarettes statewide.iii . Research shows that youth who use e-cigarettes are four times more likely to start smoking conventional cigarettes than their peers who do not vape.[[5]](#endnote-5)

“Successfully reducing the average adult smoking rate to 12.8% in New York State is a significant achievement, but new and emerging nicotine products—like e-cigarettes—could reverse the substantial gains we’ve made in reducing smoking,” said Jeanie Orr, Community Engagement Coordinator. “We know that *marketing* attracts youth to e-cigarettes, and *flavors* are what gets them to try them. *Nicotine* is what keeps them addicted." said Orr.

**Higher smoking rates among certain communities**

“Although the average smoking rate is down, our work is far from over. The smoking rate is much higher- nearly double the state average in certain populations. For example, throughout New York State, 25.5% of adults reporting frequent mental distress smoke cigarettes, as do 20% of those with less than a high school education and nearly 20% of those with an annual household income of less than $25,000,”i said Orr.

“Our goal as a program is to ensure that every New Yorker, regardless of income, education and mental health status, has the opportunity to live a tobacco-free life. We do that by partnering with communities and young people to make changes that prevent youth from ever starting and that help smokers quit,” said Orr.

While at the Capitol, CDTFC talked with lawmakers about work being done in their local communities and provided an interactive display in The Well of the Legislative Office Building, revealing the true facts behind Big Tobacco’s misleading marketing.

**The Costs of Tobacco Use in New York State**
Annual health care costs directly caused by smoking in the state are $10.39 billion.[[6]](#endnote-6) This expense results in a tax burden of $1,410 for each household every year.vi There are 28,200 deaths in New York State each year due to smoking, and thousands who are living with illnesses related to tobacco use.[[7]](#endnote-7)

The CDC recommends a $203 million annual investment in New York State’s Tobacco Control Program; the state’s investment is $39 million.vii

**ABOUT CAPITAL DISTRICT TOBACCO-FREE COMMUNITIES AND REALITY CHECK**Capital District Tobacco-Free Communities (CDTFC) is a NYS Bureau of Tobacco Control grant funded program held by St. Peter's Health Partners. CDTFC works to increase support for New York State’s tobacco-free norm through youth action and community engagement. Efforts are evidence-based, policy-driven, and cost-effective approaches that decrease youth tobacco use, motivate adult smokers to quit, and eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke. [**Reality Check of New York**](http://www.realitycheckofny.com/)empowers youth to become leaders in their community in exposing what they see as the manipulative and deceptive marketing tactics of the tobacco industry. The organization’s members produce change in their communities through grassroots mobilization and education. Visit [www.RealityCheckofNY.org](http://www.RealityCheckofNY.org) and [www.SmokeFreeCapital.org](http://www.SmokeFreeCapital.org) for more information.

**ABOUT NYS TOBACCO CONTROL PARTNERS**

The NYS tobacco control program is a network of statewide contractors who work on Advancing Tobacco-Free Communities, which includes Community Engagement and Reality Check, the Health Systems for a Tobacco-Free New York, the NYS Smokers’ Quitline and Surveillance and Research. Their efforts are leading the way toward a tobacco-free society. For more information, visit [TobaccoFreeNYS.org](http://www.tobaccofreenys.org/) and NYSmokeFree.com

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2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Population Health. BRFSS Prevalence & Trends Data [online]. 2018. (accessed Dec 13, 2019). URL: [https://nccd.cdc.gov/BRFSSPrevalence](https://nccd.cdc.gov/BRFSSPrevalence/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=DPH_BRFSS.ExploreByLocation&rdProcessAction=&SaveFileGenerated=1&irbLocationType=States&islLocation=36&islState=&islCounty=&islClass=CLASS17&islTopic=TOPIC15&islYear=2018&hidLocationType=States&hidLocation=36&hidClass=CLASS17&hidTopic=TOPIC15&hidTopicName=Current+Smoker+Status&hidYear=2018&irbShowFootnotes=Show&rdICL-iclIndicators=_RFSMOK3&iclIndicators_rdExpandedCollapsedHistory=&iclIndicators=_RFSMOK3&hidPreviouslySelectedIndicators=&DashboardColumnCount=2&rdShowElementHistory=&rdScrollX=0&rdScrollY=0&rdRnd=86109) [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
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4. NYS Dept. of Health, Bureau of Tobacco Control BRFSS reports [online]. 2017. (accessed Jan 9, 2020).
https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/brfss/reports/docs/2020-01\_brfss\_electronic\_cigarette.pdf [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Journal of the American Medical Association, Feb. 1, 2019, Association of Electronic Cigarette Use With Subsequent Initiation of Tobacco Cigarettes in US Youths, Kaitlyn M. Berry, MPH: Jessica L. Fetterman, PhD; Emelia J. Benjamin, MD, ScM: et al. [online] (accessed Nov. 13, 2019)<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2723425> [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, The Toll of Tobacco in New York. [online] (accessed Jan. 29, 2020) <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/new_york> [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, Key State-specific Tobacco-Related Data & Rankings, FY18. [online] (accessed Jan. 29, 2020) <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/factsheets/0176.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-7)