



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on November 16, 2017

FDA Expands Teen Anti-smoking Campaign to Include E-Cigarettes

The Food and Drug Administration is continuing its campaign against vaping despite evidence that it is less harmful than smoking cigarettes and is more effective in helping smokers to quit than other alternatives. The agency announced last month that it will be expanding its teen anti-smoking “Real Cost” campaign to include vaping and has unveiled its first advertisement focused on e-smoking.



FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb previewed the anti-vaping campaign at an anti-tobacco symposium at Johns Hopkins School of Public Health last month. The new ad relies on dramatic cinematography to create a tone of dread and suspense as it shows teens skating, bowling, and visiting a diner. The actors feature mangled faces, which are meant to represent deformed mouths resulting from e-smoking. The Daily Vaper notes that the shape of the mouths “interfaces with the rectangular Juul, further reinforcing the [previously reported suspicion](#) that FDA is working hand-in-glove with extremists in Congress like Sen. Chuck Schumer, who attacked that product specifically.”

Gottlieb notes that the ads will be placed where teenagers spend their time, and will direct teens to the website to learn more. Though that website does not yet exist, Gottlieb stated that a “full scale” campaign will start in 2018.

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The ad should come as no surprise as the FDA announced in August of this year it would “pursue a new, strategic public health education effort designed to prevent youth from using e-cigarettes and other electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS).” By October, it announced it would be expanding the “Real Cost” campaign to “educate teens about the dangers of nicotine on the developing brain.”

And the FDA has been targeting e-cigarettes outside of the “Real Cost” campaign for several years now, even proposing an expansion of tobacco regulations to include e-cigarettes, even though e-cigarettes do not use tobacco.

Still, the question is why.

Health officials in Europe are touting the benefits of e-cigarettes. In 2015, Public Health England announced that vaping is safer than smoking and could lead to the destruction of the traditional cigarette.

The *Guardian* reported at the time, “The health body concluded that, on ‘the best estimate so far’, e-cigarettes are about 95% less harmful than tobacco cigarettes and could one day be dispensed as a licensed medicine in an alternative to anti-smoking products such as patches.”

“My reading of the evidence is that smokers who switch to vaping remove almost all the risks smoking poses to their health,” said Professor Peter Hajek of Queen Mary University, who co-authored the report with Professor Ann McNeill of King’s College London.



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And further evidence shows that e-cigarettes have been the most successful tool to help cigarette smokers quit smoking.

“E-cigarettes have become the greatest source of ‘creative destruction’ that we’ve seen against the tobacco industry,” stated California Polytechnic State University professor of economics Michael Marlow.

By contrast, the nicotine replacement therapies that have been approved by the FDA have had abysmal success rates comparable to quitting cold turkey, according to the *Tobacco Control Journal*.

In the absence of scientific evidence against vaping, critics contend that the FDA’s campaign against e-cigarettes signals that the agency is working at the behest of the pharmaceutical companies that stand to lose a lot as e-smoking becomes increasingly popular.

Dr. Gilbert Ross, medical and executive director of the American Council on Science and Health, opined, “Some of the groups advocating for this anti-science, anti-public health charade ... are influenced by undisclosed but generous financial support from the pharmaceutical industry, which is devoted to keeping effective competition to its poorly performing nicotine replacement therapy patches, gums, and drugs off the market.”

And drug companies are not the only ones profiting off of the sale of ineffective smoking remedies that keep cigarette smokers hooked on cigarettes. In 2008, the *New York Times* reported that the federal government collected nearly \$7 billion annually in cigarette excise taxes. In 2010, the number was as high as \$15.5 billion, wrote the Daily Caller.

The FDA’s “Real Cost” campaign has been very effective in preventing teens from smoking, according to a study published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which has also been accused of colluding with the FDA against e-cigarettes. The study claims that from 2014 to 2016, there has been a 30-percent decrease in the risk for smoking initiation, preventing approximately 350,000 youth between the ages of 11-18 from smoking. If that is indeed true and that campaign is as influential as the study claims, it is possible that the FDA could mislead teens to believe that e-smoking is just as harmful as cigarette smoking through its expanded campaign. This could drive more teens to smoking cigarettes, if they believe that vaping is just as harmful.



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