

# A BACK-TO-SCHOOL WAKE-UP CALL: THE YOUTH VAPING CRISIS

## Hidden in Plain Sight,

vaping has infiltrated schools, presenting a growing challenge for educators, parents and students. According to the CDC, **youth across the country use e-cigarettes or vapes more than any other tobacco product**. E-cigarettes, like all tobacco products, contain **nicotine — a highly addictive chemical** that can impair important brain functions responsible for attention, learning, mood and impulse control. Most tobacco use, including vaping, begins during adolescence, a period influenced by factors like targeted tobacco marketing, easy accessibility and peer pressure. As this trend continues to grow, a deeper understanding is needed to help address the crisis among our youth!

**Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability and death in the United States.** According to the 2023 Nevada Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), **more than 1 in 3 (34%) of high school students and nearly 1 in 5 (18%) middle school students** in Clark County have tried e-cigarettes. Additionally, the 2023 Nevada YRBS found that **13% of Clark County high school students and 8% of Clark County middle school students** used e-cigarettes in the last 30 days. Among students nationwide who currently use e-cigarettes, 55.6% use disposable e-cigarettes and 15.6% use prefilled or refillable pods from popular brands such as **Elf Bar, Breeze and Mr. Fog**.

To effectively address the youth vaping crisis, we must understand the contributing factors. First, the tobacco industry's widespread advertising in the media is a key factor, with **74% of students reporting having seen e-cigarette-related social media posts**. Second, the availability of flavored vapes is one of the top 10 reasons youth report ever using an e-cigarette. This is alarming since the ASPIRE Center reports that **35% of Las Vegas public schools are within 1,000 feet of a tobacco retailer**. Lastly, the most common reason that students try e-cigarettes is because a friend is using them, with **60% of Clark County high school students and 57% of Clark County middle school students reporting that they got a vape from a friend, family member or someone else**. By recognizing these factors, we can help to reduce tobacco use and promote overall health and well-being among our youth!

Quitting vaping can lead to many benefits including: improving health, enhancing quality of life, and reducing the risks of premature death and adverse health effects like cancer. Fortunately, there are resources to help Nevada's youth on their quit journey like the **American Lung Association's NOT For Me program** and the **Truth Initiative's EX Program**. To access these programs, please visit [notforme.org](https://notforme.org) or [join.exprogram.com](https://join.exprogram.com). For more information, please visit the Southern Nevada Health District's Tobacco Control Program at [gethealthyclarkcounty.org](https://gethealthyclarkcounty.org).

