

Tobacco industry exposed for continuing to mislead public about e-cigarettes

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The American Heart Association, the leading voluntary health organization devoted to a world of longer, healthier lives, issued the following statement from CEO Nancy Brown following hearings in the

House Committee on Oversight and Reform Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy today and yesterday on Juul Labs' contribution to the youth nicotine epidemic:

"The [tobacco industry](#)'s false assurances in response to the e-cigarette epidemic should be deeply concerning to every parent in America. The industry continues to minimize its role in causing the epidemic, even as more facts come to light about how e-cigarette manufacturers exploit teenagers to drive up nicotine addiction and boost corporate profits. Elected officials must act to protect youth and adolescents by cracking down on the tobacco industry and pressing the FDA to ensure e-cigarettes are subject to the same requirements as traditional cigarettes.

"Two days of congressional hearings added to the already overwhelming evidence that Juul has systematically addicted youth and adolescents to its products. Student Caleb Mintz testified that Juul demonstrated its products to 9th graders in his New York school and described e-cigarettes as 'totally safe.'" Nurse Rae O'Leary testified that Juul treated Native American tribes as 'guinea pigs' when it sought to provide its products for free to members of the Cheyenne River Reservation in exchange for a six-figure payment. Stanford University researcher Dr. Robert Jackler said Juul's initial marketing effort was designed to create a 'cult-like following.'" Dr. Jonathan Winickoff, a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and Matthew Myers, president of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, also testified about the epidemic of youth e-cigarette use.

"Incredulously, Juul Co-Founder and Chief Products Officer James Monsees testified that the company 'never wanted' teenagers to use its products while admitting Juul rushed its products to market to evade FDA regulation and continues to market flavors that appeal to kids. Juul Labs CEO Kevin Burns previously told CNBC he was 'sorry' that teenagers are using e-cigarettes. Yet Juul has relied on tobacco industry

tactics to aggressively target youth and adolescents. Marlboro manufacturer Altria owns a 35 percent stake in Juul, and [tobacco companies](#) have a long history of targeting underage users, including social media promotions for products that are available in thousands of flavors that appeal to kids. The evidence is clear that the tobacco industry's predatory practices directly contributed to a 78 percent rise in use among high schoolers and a 48 percent increase among middle schoolers in 2017-18 alone.

"The path forward is clear: The FDA must strengthen existing sales restrictions on e-cigarettes. The agency should:

- Remove flavored e-cigarettes from the market, including mint and menthol flavors;
- Prohibit all marketing practices, including those on social media, that are shown to appeal to children;
- Suspend online sales of e-cigarettes until effective age verification mechanisms are established;
- and Enforce rules that prevent the sale of products that were not commercially marketed as of August 8, 2016, or were modified after that date, without premarket review.

"In addition, federal, state and local lawmakers should unite behind proposals to:

- Increase the sales age to 21 for all tobacco products;
- Raise tobacco excise taxes; Implement comprehensive clean indoor air laws;
- Support comprehensive coverage of evidence-based tobacco cessation therapies;
- and Eliminate the sale of tobacco in pharmacies and other health-related outlets.

"The American Heart Association is committed to ending [tobacco](#) use and nicotine addiction in the U.S. Strong oversight of e-cigarettes is desperately needed to address the industry-caused [e-cigarette](#) epidemic. We want to thank Chairman Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL), Ranking Member Michael Cloud (R-TX), and Members of the Oversight and Reform Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy for calling attention to this critical public health issue."

Provided by American Heart Association

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