After decades of progress to reduce tobacco use among youth, current use of tobacco among high school students has exploded to nearly 30% - an increase from 19% in 2017 - largely due to the popularity and appeal of flavored electronic vapor products (EVP). \(^1\)

The tobacco industry uses flavored products to attract and retain customers. Youth, minorities, women and other populations are aggressively marketed to and disproportionately impacted.

**The rate of vaping among high school youth in VT doubled between 2017 and 2019 \(^1\)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**One in two high school youth have ever used an electronic vapor product (EVP) \(^1\)**

**Flavors, including menthol, are marketed in all tobacco products**

- Among Vermont youth and young adults ages 12 to 25 years:
  - 27% of past 30-day smokers used menthol/mint flavored cigarettes.\(^2\)
  - 56% of past 30-day vapers used menthol/mint EVPs.\(^2\)
- Flavors mask the harsh taste of tobacco in products, including in chew and little cigars.

**Flavors are easily accessible in Vermont**

- 86% of tobacco retailers sold at least one kind of flavored tobacco product in 2018.\(^3\)
- 40% of stores sold flavored e-cigarettes and 75% offered flavored cigarillos or cigars.\(^3\)

**Most tobacco use starts with flavors – then people get hooked**

- First use of a flavored tobacco product (e.g., cigarettes, cigars, EVPs, hookah, smokeless tobacco) has been shown to lead to continued use of the product.\(^4,5,6\)
  - 86% of young Vermonters who ever used an EVP, first used a flavored EVP.\(^2\)
  - 86% of current EVP users ages 12 to 25 use a flavored EVP.\(^2\)

**Flavors – especially menthol – make it easier to start and harder to quit**

- Menthol cigarette smoking is more prevalent among youth and minority smokers.\(^7\)
- Menthol flavorings also contribute to addiction in youth smokers.\(^7\)
- Adult menthol smokers are less likely to quit smoking compared to non-menthol smokers.\(^8\)
Flavors Drive Tobacco Use in Vermont

January 2020

References:

2 Vermont Department of Health and University of Vermont. Policy and Communication Evaluation Study (PACE).; 2019