

RESOLUTION NO. 19-02

PUEBLO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT  
Board of Health

A Resolution Declaring A Public Health Initiative to Eliminate the Tobacco and  
Youth Vaping Crisis in Pueblo County

**WHEREAS**, the mission of the Board of Health and the Pueblo Department of Public Health and Environment (PDPHE) is to promote and protect the health and environment of Pueblo County; and

**WHEREAS**, the Colorado Public Health Act of 2008 requires the PDPHE Board of Health to develop and promote public policies necessary to secure the conditions for a healthy community; and

**WHEREAS**, tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable disease and death in the United States and Colorado, contributing to the death of over 480,000 people annually, including 5,100 Coloradans; and

**WHEREAS**, 95% of tobacco users start using before twenty-one years of age; and

**WHEREAS**, electronic smoking device (ESD) use, or vaping, among youth is increasing at an alarming rate, with an estimated 27% of Colorado high school students vaping and ESDs now being the second-most used substance among Colorado high school students; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2017, an estimated 60.4% of high school students in Pueblo County reported having ever used an ESD, 36.2% reporting past 30-day use of ESDs; and

**WHEREAS**, nicotine, the highly addicting ingredient in all tobacco products, which is also found in ESDs, has been proven to lead to lifelong addiction for youth, negatively impacts adolescent brain development, including affecting working memory and attention; and

**WHEREAS**, youth who vape are four times more likely to start using traditional cigarettes after just one year compared to the youth who do not vape; and

**WHEREAS**, vaping has recently been associated with an outbreak of a newly recognized acute onset lung disorder, which can cause severe disease, high rates of hospitalization, and even death; and

**WHEREAS**, the vaping industry aggressively markets their products using the same tactics that have been proven to increase youth smoking. E-liquid flavors like cotton candy, banana split, gummy bears, and others appeal to children and teens, and the vaping industry uses these flavors and other advertising tactics to draw youth in; and

**WHEREAS**, retail regulations, including tobacco/nicotine retailer licensing, raising the minimum legal sales age, and banning flavored tobacco/nicotine products, when combined with strong enforcement and monitoring, help reduce illegal sales of tobacco and nicotine products to adolescents and reduces initiation and use of these products among young people; and

**WHEREAS**, interventions targeting youth, such as the Tobacco-Free Schools policy, provider screening and referral, and cessation support, are effective at reducing initiation and use of tobacco and nicotine products and improving cessation outcomes for youth; and

**WHEREAS**, tobacco/nicotine-free environments and policies have been demonstrated to encourage smokers to quit, discourage youth from starting smoking, and alter the perception of adolescents as to the social acceptability of tobacco/nicotine use; and

**WHEREAS**, by increasing the unit price of all tobacco/nicotine products is the most effective method of reducing initiation, promoting quit attempts among users, and protecting the overall health of the community at large; and

**WHEREAS**, protecting youth from tobacco and nicotine products by implementing proven prevention and intervention strategies, as well as policy, systems, and environmental change strategies, in collaboration with partner organizations and policy makers is strongly recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics as “one of the most important things that a society can do to protect children’s health;” and

**WHEREAS**, building protective factors by changing social norms, encouraging more caregiver involvement, helping children and teens feel safe at school, and increasing positive social opportunities for our community’s youth are proven methods for reducing youth substance use, including tobacco/nicotine products, as well as reducing violence, hopelessness, and anxiety.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Health of PDPHE, in order to address the public health crisis of vaping among adolescents and to protect the health of all young people in Pueblo County, hereby recommends the following actions by key community stakeholders:

1. School districts and schools, communicate and consistently enforce Tobacco-Free Schools policies; adopt restorative discipline practices and promote alternatives to suspension in order to keep students engaged in the school environment; utilize comprehensive health education focused on life skills and decision-making; and support students and staff in their cessation journeys.
2. Parents and Guardians, educate yourselves about the dangers of vaping, have open conversations with your children, and support young people in their cessation journeys. Parents wishing to quit tobacco/nicotine use themselves should speak with their physicians, call the Colorado QuitLine, and access any additional, proven effective quit resources.
3. Youth, speak with your peers about healthy stress coping and healthy decision making, get involved in after school activities and other positive pro-social activities, model healthy behaviors for peers and younger students or siblings, and advocate for school/community level policy change. Young people wishing to quit vaping are encouraged to speak with their parents, a school nurse, physician, or other trusted adults and call the Colorado QuitLine or utilize another age-appropriate cessation support.
4. Local governments, including cities and counties: Consider strong retail regulations, including licensing of tobacco retailers, raising the minimum legal sales age, and limiting sales of flavored tobacco/nicotine products; policies restricting tobacco industry advertising and promotions at the point-of-sale; policies ensuring comprehensive tobacco/nicotine-free environments, including outdoor spaces such as parks and playgrounds; and interventions aimed at the price of all tobacco/nicotine products, including restricting couponing and discounts and increasing taxes.
5. Retailers, keep all tobacco/nicotine products behind the counter, requiring clerk assistance to purchase, check identification of all customers purchasing tobacco/nicotine products, train all clerks in responsible tobacco/nicotine sales practices, and establish a corporate culture of not selling to minors and following all applicable laws.

6. Health Care Providers, especially pediatricians: Screen all patients for tobacco use, including ESD use or vaping, counsel on the harms of vaping and the importance of quitting, and refer to the Colorado QuitLine or other developmentally-appropriate cessation support service. Refer to the American Academy of Pediatrics clinical practice policy to protect children from tobacco, nicotine, and tobacco smoke.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Pueblo Department of Public Health and Environment is committed to dedicating resources to assisting stakeholders with these changes and can provide technical assistance, model policy language, training, and selected materials directly to communities and stakeholders.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 26th day of November 2019, in Pueblo County, Colorado.

PUEBLO COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

By:   
Eileen Dennis, Board of Health President