

TSET Healthy Youth Initiative Program Moving Forward

Presentation to TSET Board of Directors shows Oklahoma youth struggle with vape use and nutrition.

OKLAHOMA CITY (Nov. 12, 2020) – A new survey shows the serious health challenges faced by Oklahoma youth: vaping products lure Oklahoma youth to tobacco products and create nicotine addiction, and youth do not consume enough fruits and vegetables.

The findings were presented to the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET) as an update on phase one of the agency's [Healthy Youth Initiative](#). The update came during the Board's quarterly meeting on Thursday.

An online survey was conducted for seven weeks between August and September 2020 to assess tobacco- and obesity-related behaviors, knowledge and perceptions among Oklahoma teens to help direct messaging for the TSET Health Youth Initiative.

"Today's youth face incredible health challenges, from the rapid rise in electronic cigarette use to intense marketing of sugar sweetened beverages and unhealthy foods," said Michelle Stephens, vice chair of the TSET Board of Directors. "Improving health outcomes in Oklahoma starts with our children, and that is why the TSET Board of Directors made this investment in our state's future."

More than 400 youth statewide participated in the survey that found:

- 71% of vape users surveyed reported that e-cigarettes were the first tobacco product they tried;
- Among the overall sample, vapes were the most commonly used tobacco product (23%), and rural youth, specifically, reported significantly higher rates of vaping;
- Vape users reported high rates of co-use with other substances including alcohol (68%) and cigarettes (41%);
- 47% of vape users who never smoked cigarettes were susceptible to cigarettes, highlighting the dangerous potential of product escalation;
- 39% of vape users reported the most common way they accessed vapes was by borrowing them from someone else, implying that deterring youth access to tobacco products must go beyond Tobacco 21 laws.

The survey also highlighted the need for youth tobacco cessation support, with 46% of users having already attempted to quit at least five times.

These results support TSET's investment in My Life, My Quit, a free and confidential, text-based vape and tobacco cessation service designed specifically for youth 13-17. Teens interested in quitting vaping can visit mylifemyquit.com or text "Start My Quit" to 855-891-9989.

The additional information from the survey supported the TSET Healthy Youth Initiative kick-off campaign this fiscal year to counter tobacco-related health behaviors among teens 13-18 in Oklahoma. The two online and social media tobacco prevention campaigns targeted rural and urban vape use, which delivered more than 19 million impressions among Oklahoma teens. The youth cessation campaign for My Life, My Quit will start this month and run through the holidays.

Nutrition-related survey results revealed low water and high soda consumption rates as other critical health issues for Oklahoma youth, along with the need for more fruit and vegetable intake:

- 62% of teens surveyed reported they drank water two or more times daily and 31% of teens drank water less than daily;
- Daily soda consumption was high with 19% of teens overall, 20% of overweight teens, and 25% of rural teens reporting they drank soda two or more times daily in the past seven days;
- Overall, teens were most likely to report that they did not eat vegetables or fruits in the past seven days because they did not think about it (43% for vegetables, 53% for fruits) and their family did not buy it (38% for vegetables, 38% for fruits).

"The results of this survey provide relevant data points that show us that there is work to do in addressing the health of Oklahoma youth. Helping youth understand the benefits of healthy choices is key in helping the next generation of Oklahomans start out adulthood on the right foot," said Julie Bisbee, TSET executive director. "This effort aims to support healthy choices and focuses on preventing health issues before they take root. Prevention is more cost effective than the treatment of preventable diseases."

TSET will tackle these nutritional health challenges with a new youth obesity prevention campaign planned for early 2021. The new messaging, along with the tobacco and vape prevention efforts launched this year, fall under the TSET Healthy Youth Initiative. (tsethealthyouth.com).

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The **TSET Healthy Youth Initiative** is a statewide media effort focused on preventing and reducing tobacco use and obesity for Oklahomans ages 13-18. The initiative promotes healthy lifestyle choices for teens and gives parents resources to support their children in maintaining or developing healthy habits for a lifetime. Visit TSET Healthy Youth Initiative to learn more.

My Life, My Quit is a free program to help Oklahoma teens, ages 13 -17, quit tobacco, including e-cigarettes. Offering tools most utilized by teens, free live texting, web chat

and phone calls, My Life, My Quit supports teens through the steps of quitting tobacco to be able to live tobacco free. Funded by the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET), these free services for Oklahoma teens can be found at MyLifeMyQuit.com or by texting “Start My Quit” to 855-891-9989.

The **Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust** (TSET) serves as a partner and bridge builder for organizations shaping a healthier future for all Oklahomans. TSET provides leadership at the intersections of health by working with local coalitions and initiatives across the state, cultivating innovative and life-changing research, and working across public and private sectors to develop, support, implement and evaluate creative strategies to take advantage of emerging opportunities to improve the public’s health. To learn more, visit TSET.ok.gov.

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