

Take a Breath: Teen Voices on Tobacco & Vaping

Poster Contest – Key Messages

- Youth know better than adults about youth smoking/tobacco use and vaping. It is important to hear youth voices and views on how tobacco and/or vaping impacts them and their friends, family, school and community.
- Youth vaping has increased over the past five years, and vaping and smoking rates in the Interior Health region are higher than the provincial average. According to the McCreary Centre Society's Understanding Tobacco Use and Vaping Among BC Youth report:
 - Youth were more likely to have vaped in the past month than to have ever tried smoking tobacco (27 per cent vs. 19 per cent).
 - Rural-based youth were more likely than those from urban areas to have vaped (33 per cent vs. 27 per cent). However, unlike tobacco use, where youth in the Interior were as likely to have smoked as those in the Northern and Vancouver Island regions, youth in the Interior were the most likely to have vaped.
 - In the month before taking the survey, 6 per cent of youth had both vaped and smoked cigarettes; 21 per cent had vaped and not smoked cigarettes; and 1 per cent had smoked cigarettes and not vaped.
 - Among youth who smoked tobacco in the past month, around half had been smoking for at least two years, including 19 per cent who had first smoked at least four years earlier.

This increase in youth nicotine use is concerning.

- Through this project, we hope to promote conversation within the school community and help teens make informed decisions about smoking/tobacco use and vaping, and in particular understanding teens' perception of tobacco use and vaping. The poster contest themes will invite teens to increase awareness of and develop messaging about:
 - the burden of health impact associated with tobacco and vapour usage
 - the tobacco and vaping industry's marketing strategies
 - the difference between commercial tobacco use vs. ceremonial/traditional tobacco use
 - tobacco/vaping impact on the environment: single use plastics, toxic litter and impact on forest fires and house fires

Youth messages will help their peers make informed decisions about smoking/tobacco use and vaping. *This campaign is for youth, by youth.*

- It is hoped the poster campaign will also create opportunities within the education system, as well as between teens, peers and parents, to initiate conversations regarding teen vaping and smoking/tobacco use.
- For this contest, youth living in the Interior Health region in Grades 8-12 will be invited to submit original artwork that shares a message about the impact of youth smoking/tobacco use and vaping, inspired by one of the following themes:
 - The importance of ceremonial tobacco for Indigenous traditions, and how it differs from everyday (commercial) tobacco use
 - Important facts about smoking/tobacco and vaping products

- Tobacco and vaping companies' strategies to promote use
 - Impact of smoking/tobacco and vaping on my life
 - Environmental impact of smoking/tobacco and vaping
- A winning poster will be chosen for each of the five themes, professionally printed, and displayed at schools throughout the Interior Health region. They will also be shared within the community through Interior Health awareness and promotional campaigns, including social media and the IH website, and displayed at IH hospitals and health-care centres.