



# ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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“PROMOTING & PROTECTING THE HEALTH OF ONEIDA COUNTY”

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## News Release

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## Health Department Continues Vaping Enforcement & Education *Nearly 20,000 Illegal E-Cigarettes Confiscated Since Last Year*

The Oneida County Health Department (OCHD) is continuing its efforts to enforce against the sale of illegal e-cigarettes and educate the public about the harmful effects of vaping.

“Not only is vaping harmful to youth and adults alike, but the sale of flavored e-cigarettes is illegal,” said Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente Jr. “Our Health Department has worked tirelessly to rid our communities of these prohibited products and educate the public about the dangerous health risks they pose. I commend the job they have done and thank our partners in the District Attorney’s Office, Sheriff’s Office and other law enforcement agencies that assist us in enforcement.”

The use of e-cigarettes — which are also known as “electronic cigarettes,” “tanks,” “mods” and “vapes” — is referred to as “vaping.” Flavored tobacco products are utilized in e-cigarettes to mask the harshness and make them more appealing. More than 80% of youth who have tried tobacco started with a flavored product.

The sale of flavored vapor products is prohibited in New York State under Public Health Law Article 13-F Section 1399-MM-1. Specifically, products “intended or reasonably expected to be used with or for the consumption of nicotine, with a distinguishable taste or aroma, other than the taste or aroma of tobacco.” All sale of tobacco and vapor products and smoking paraphernalia to people under the age of 21 is also prohibited in New York State. The OCHD began enforcement against those who are illegally selling flavored vaping products in 2023. Since then, it has confiscated 19,974 illegal vapes from 16 different sellers throughout Oneida County.

According to the New York State Association of County Health Officials, 18% of high school students in New York report using e-cigarettes, which is higher than the national average of 10%. Of those youth who vape, 85% use flavored tobacco products.

The average age a New Yorker starts smoking is 13 years old. Smoking continues to be a leading cause of death in the state, with more than 28,000 people dying each year. Several efforts have been made to decrease smoking rates, particularly among youth, and according to the New York State Department of Health, cigarette smoking among high school youth declined by 82% between 2000 and 2018. However, between 2014 and 2018, the use of e-cigarettes among high school youth increased 160%.

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Although E-cigarettes generally contain fewer toxic chemicals than cigarettes, they are not harmless. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the aerosol that is breathed from the vaping device can contain harmful substances including nicotine, ultrafine particles, flavorings like diacetyl, volatile organic compounds, cancer-causing chemicals and heavy metals such as nickel, tin and lead. Even products that are marketed as containing zero nicotine have been found to contain nicotine.

“Vaping is bad for you, plain and simple,” said Oneida County Director of Health Daniel W. Gilmore, Ph.D., MPH. “Education is the key to promoting and protecting the health of our residents and we will continue to spread that message to everyone we can.”

To learn more about electronic cigarettes, visit [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/e-cigarettes/](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/) and about NYS Tobacco Control laws at [https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/tobacco\\_control/current\\_policies.htm](https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/tobacco_control/current_policies.htm).