



Clinton County Health Department

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“Working Together for a Healthier Community”

www.clintonhealth.org



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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News Release

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Tobacco Use and Vaping Community Forum

Plattsburgh, March 10, 2018. In response to rising community concern, the *Clinton County Tobacco Use Reduction Task Force* has added information on vaping to a presentation about the health benefits of raising the age of sale for tobacco products. ***Tobacco Use and Vaping: Policy Solutions to Protect Youth Health*** will take place at 4:30 PM on Wednesday, March 13, 2019 at the Government Center Meeting Room, 137 Margaret St., Plattsburgh.

The one hour session will address the public health concerns associated with tobacco use and vaping; trends in the use of these products; and tactics employed by the tobacco and vape industries to entice youth. Health care providers, teachers, parents, students and other stakeholders will share their perspectives. The *Tobacco Use Reduction Task Force* will present policy solutions to reduce youth initiation of tobacco use.

“Smoking is still the primary cause of preventable death in New York State, claiming over 26,000 lives each year,” states Karen Derusha, a supervising public health educator, who represents Clinton County Health Department on the Task Force. “The adult smoking rate in Clinton County is currently 24.7%, a full 10 points higher than the State average of 14.2%.” She also notes that vaping rates among youth in New York State doubled between 2014 and 2016. “We are witnessing a whole new generation of young people addicted to nicotine and likely to suffer the health harms associated with the use of these products.”

Vaping is the term used to describe the use of electronic devices to inhale nicotine and other substances. Vaping is relatively new but use of these electronic devices has exploded in the last few years. According to Dana Bushey Isabella, program director for *Tobacco Free Clinton Franklin and Essex* also known as *Tobacco Free CFE*, “These vaping products are addicting youth, exposing them to harmful chemicals, and leading to a rise in tobacco use rates for the first time in since 2014. Communities have the power to control the time, manner and placement of tobacco and vaping products at the local level. Policies for the retail environment, outdoor spaces and multi-unit housing de-normalize highly addictive products.”

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“Persons who have any physical mobility or other needs, call the telephone number above to arrange for accommodations”

Nicotine, the addictive ingredient in tobacco, is a component of most vaping products. “Youth who vape are becoming addicted to nicotine. With that addiction, we are concerned about a future reversal of the downward trend in youth smoking.” Ms. Bushey Isabella warns,

One strategy to reduce the potential harms associated with tobacco use and vaping that has gained traction across the nation and in other parts of New York State is an effort to raise the minimum age of sale for tobacco products, including e-cigarettes from 18 to 21. Studies show that 96% of smokers start using tobacco products before the age of 21. Raising the legal age of sale for tobacco products, has the potential to lower the rate of tobacco use by 12% resulting in over 200,000 fewer premature deaths nationwide.

New York State is considering *T-21* as part of the current budget process. If the legislation passes, the *Tobacco Use Reduction Task Force* will help to educate the public about its implementation. If the State does not sign *T-21* into law, health advocates will continue to educate on its health benefits, knowing that local legislation is a viable alternative. Essex County passed a *T-21* law that went into effect in January. “That could be done in Clinton County too,” noted Ms. Derusha and Ms. Bushey Isabella.

About the Clinton County Tobacco Use Reduction Taskforce

The *Clinton County Tobacco Use Reduction Taskforce* is part of a larger regional effort led by the *Adirondack Health Institute’s Population Health Improvement Project*. The *Task Force* includes representatives of Clinton County Health Department, Tobacco Free CFE & Reality Check, Healthy Heart Network, and University of Vermont – CVPH Health Network.

About the Clinton County Health Department:

The Health Department is an accredited full service department serving the residents of Clinton County. The Health Department’s Mission is to improve and protect the health, well-being and environment of the people of Clinton County. Visit our website at www.clintonhealth.org or connect with us on Facebook (@clintonhealth), Twitter (@ClintonCountyHD), and Instagram (clintoncountyhealth).

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