

Escape the Vape Video Challenge Returns for 2024

Students in Minnesota to participate in e-cigarette PSA video contest

The Escape the Vape Video Challenge, a youth vaping prevention video contest, is back for 2024. Minnesota middle and high school students are invited to create and submit a 30-second public service announcement (PSA) video to educate their peers on the dangers of e-cigarette use, also known as vaping. Submissions will be entered into a competition for cash prizes for both students and their schools.

Escape the Vape is a collaboration between a broad group of Minnesota organizations working to reduce youth e-cigarette use. The objective of this video contest is to engage youth to use their voices and inform their peers about the dangers of vaping. Last year, students in middle and high school submitted 350 PSA videos. This year, there will be an extra resubmission period for youth who submit a video that does not align with the guidelines.



Masonic Cancer Center, Twin Cities Orthopedics and Oxboro Family Chiropractic are excited to sponsor the contest again for 2024 and promote engagement with youth about this topic.

Heather Maier, a teacher from Hastings Middle School, has also made it her mission to ensure her students understand the risks of vaping and incorporates the contest in her curriculum.

“If students don't understand the dangers of vaping and they don't start to care, I don't think we will get out of this,” said Maier. “It can become a bigger issue of chemical dependency and a lifelong struggle.”

According to the CDC, within the past 30 days, 14% of high school students have reported using e-cigarettes and nearly nine out of 10 adults who smoke cigarettes daily first try smoking by age 18. E-cigarettes have escalated this problem, with over 5,700 kids starting to vape every day.

“Even more troubling, our Minnesota Youth Tobacco Survey data show that 70% of students who vape are showing signs of nicotine dependence—like intolerable cravings, and 63% are

having trouble quitting,” said Sharrilyn Helgertz, PhD, data scientist for the Minnesota Department of Health. “However, we’re encouraged to also find that half of students who use e-cigarettes want help to quit.”

Minnesota teens can get free help to quit from My Life, My Quit™ by texting “Start My Quit” to 36072 or visiting MyLifeMyQuit.com.

Flavored commercial tobacco products appeal to youth. E-cigarettes come in thousands of flavors, and teens who use flavored e-cigarettes are more likely to keep using them. Recent data show that nine out of 10 Minnesota teens who use e-cigarettes use flavored products.

“We know that kids use substances for different reasons that mainly fall into two categories – to have fun or to cope,” added Helgertz. “But research shows that vaping nicotine can burden teens with addiction and worsen their feelings of anxiety and depression.”

Youth participants from last year also hope the contest will inspire change.

“The Escape the Vape Video Challenge has given me an understanding of the dangers of vaping and has provided me with a chance to educate and protect my generation of people,” said Esme Malloy, a 2024 youth advisor for the Escape the Vape Video Challenge.

Minnesota Youth can learn more about the Escape the Vape Video Challenge and submit their video at mnescapethevape.org.



Key Contest Dates

- **February 1, 2024** - Video Submission Opens (*Students will have the month of February to finalize and submit their videos*)
- **February 29, 2024** - Video Submission Deadline
- **April 22, 2024** - Finalists Announced
- **April 22 - May 3, 2024** - Public Voting
- **May 7, 2024** - Winners Announced

About the Escape the Vape Video Challenge

The Escape the Vape Video Challenge is a program coordinated by ACET, Inc. in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Health. The contest is sponsored by the Masonic Cancer Center at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities Orthopedics and Oxboro Family Chiropractic.

For more information on sponsorships or how to promote the contest with youth in your community visit [Escape the Vape Video Challenge](#).