



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

CHARLES D. BAKER  
Governor

KARYN E. POLITO  
Lieutenant Governor

September 28, 2018

Dear School Administrators,

According to the Surgeon General's 2016 report on *E-cigarette Use among Youth and Young Adults*, over the last few years, e-cigarette use has increased 900 percent among high school students in the United States. In 2017, 40 percent of Massachusetts high school students reported using e-cigarettes at least once (Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2017). E-cigarettes and other vaping devices can be difficult to identify, emit limited odor, and have an aerosol that dissipates quickly. The pods or e-liquids that fill these devices are often flavored like candy or fruit, and can contain the same amount of nicotine as a pack of cigarettes.

Nicotine can be dangerous for the developing adolescent brain-negatively impacting learning, memory, and attention. Nicotine exposure through e-cigarettes also increases the likelihood of future combustible cigarette use, and a lifetime of addiction to tobacco and other substances.

Local tobacco control programs in Massachusetts have reported receiving multiple requests from school personnel for assistance in addressing this emerging issue.

In response, the Massachusetts Tobacco Cessation and Prevention Program at the Department of Public Health (DPH) has launched a campaign titled "The New Look of Nicotine Addiction." The goal of the campaign is to *educate parents and adults who work with youth* about e-cigarettes and their dangers. As a part of the campaign, DPH assembled a toolkit of information, resources, and free curricula to use in your school. The toolkit is available at [GetOutraged.org](http://GetOutraged.org) (click on "For Schools") and provides free tools to download. The DPH is also working on materials specifically for youth and we will communicate with you again when those materials are ready to use with your students.

We encourage you to visit the website, [GetOutraged.org](http://GetOutraged.org) review the Toolkit and distribute the information to school staff. In addition, please refer to a letter from the Attorney General that was sent to school partners in June that also includes resources and addresses the issue of industry-sponsored curricula and outreach to schools.

Thank you for helping to protect youth and keep the next generation safe from the harms of tobacco and nicotine.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Monica Bharel in black ink.

Monica Bharel, MD, MPH  
Commissioner,  
Massachusetts Department of  
Public Health

Handwritten signature of Jeffrey C. Riley in black ink.

Jeffrey C. Riley  
Commissioner,  
Massachusetts Department of  
Elementary and Secondary Education