Sep 4, 2020

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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG Moody Warns of Underage Vaping

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody is taking action to stop minors vaping and asking parents to talk to their children about the dangers of underage e-cigarette use as students resume in-person learning. Concerns surrounding underage vaping are heightened as the world continues to fight the spread of COVID19—a deadly virus that attacks the respiratory system.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “We are engaged in a war against a virus that attacks the respiratory system, but even before this battle began, an epidemic of underage vaping was harming the lungs of school-age children. That is why it is more important, now than ever before, that we do everything we can to stop underage vaping and protect the health of our children.

“Not only am I Florida’s Attorney General, I am also a mother. So, while my office continues to investigate and litigate against companies marketing vaping products to minors, I want to reach out directly to parents like me and urge them to talk to their children about the dangers of underage vaping. Talk to them about peer pressure and addiction. Tell them it is okay to say no to vaping—this small stance could save them from a lifetime of nicotine addiction or permanently damaged lungs.”

Earlier this year, Attorney General Moody, after meeting with doctors, warned parents about reports of Florida teens being rushed to the hospital with COVID-19 like symptoms after using e-cigarette products—some needing to be placed on ventilators. To view the warning, click here.

According to a 2019 Florida Department of Health report, e-cigarette use among Florida high school students increased 63% from 2017 to 2018. The report claimed that nearly one in four Florida high school students now admit to vaping. Another study found many young people may not know that vaping products contain nicotine. DOH is now reporting 119 cases of vaping-related pulmonary illnesses statewide—including two deaths. Florida law currently prohibits the sale or delivery of nicotine products to anyone under the age of 18. According to the National Institute of Health, the youth vaping increase represents the biggest one-year increase in use ever seen for any substance in the history of the NIH’s Monitoring the Future survey.

In June, Attorney General Moody took legal action against two Florida vaping companies marketing to minors and failing to properly verify the age of their customers. The court action against Creative Vape Labs Inc. d/b/a Monster Vape Labs and Lizard Juice, L.L.C. continues and stems from the Attorney General’s ongoing investigation into 21 companies selling vaping products in Florida and using marketing tactics that appear to target minors. For more information on the litigation, click here. For more on the ongoing investigation, click here.

During the 2020 Florida Legislative Session, Attorney General Moody worked with state lawmakers on legislation to prevent the sale and marketing of vaping products to minors. SB 810 would strengthen age-verification requirements at point of sale; require that flavors that attract kids be approved to by the FDA prior to their sale; bring age restrictions in line with already existing federal law; and allow for vaping education classes for minors caught in possession of e-cigarette devices and products. The legislation overwhelmingly passed both houses of the Florida Legislature with bipartisan support.

Prior to the start of the last school year, Attorney General Moody held a round table discussion with Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez, Florida Education Commissioner Richard Corcoran and officials from the DOH to discuss the record setting addiction increases in youth vaping and how to better protect students.

At the beginning of the last school year, Attorney General Moody and a bipartisan coalition of attorneys general sent a letter to major streaming companies asking to eliminate tobacco imagery in all future original content rated TV-Y, TV-Y7, TV-G, TV-PG, TV-14, G, PG and PG-13. The letter also encouraged the streaming companies to improve or offer parental controls so that parents and guardians can easily restrict content with tobacco imagery in youth programming. To view the letter, click here.

Upon hearing reports of children coming ill due to vaping and increasing statistics of youth addicted to nicotine, Attorney General Moody launched a statewide fact-gathering mission to learn more from Florida school and law enforcement officials about the dramatic increase in teen vaping. Since the mission concluded, Attorney General Moody has taken multiple actions to curb underage vaping in Florida and hold those responsible who market to and target our youth. Attorney General Moody remains committed to the mission to end underage vaping in Florida to protect children.