

Vaping and Kids: IPS Joins Lawsuit Against Juul for Targeting Teens

Vaping has become a concerning trend among teenagers, and Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) is taking a stand against the makers of JUUL vape products. Joining hundreds of schools across the country, IPS has become the latest Indiana public school district to sign on to a lawsuit accusing JUUL Labs Inc. of targeting teens in their marketing and contributing to what health officials have labeled an “epidemic of youth e-cigarette use.” This article will delve into the details of the lawsuit and shed light on the impact of vaping on students’ health and well-being.

The Rise of Youth E-cigarette Use

In recent years, the use of [e-cigarettes](#), particularly among teenagers, has skyrocketed. The complaint filed in the lawsuit highlights a significant increase in nicotine use among high school seniors between 2017 and 2018. By 2019, over 5 million middle and high school students reported current use of e-cigarettes, with more than 25% of high schoolers being users.

According to the 2018 Indiana Youth Tobacco Survey, JUUL products have made their way into the hands of more than one-third of Indiana high school students. These alarming statistics have prompted IPS and other school districts to take action against JUUL.

Allegations Against JUUL

The lawsuit accuses JUUL of employing tactics reminiscent of earlier tobacco industry practices. It claims that the company targeted youth through slick advertising and maximized addiction by delivering nicotine efficiently. JUUL’s use of young models and vibrant, “fun” themes, along with enticing flavors like mango, mint, and crème brulee, are cited as evidence of their deliberate targeting of teenagers. However, JUUL discontinued the sale of non-menthol-based flavors in 2019.

Attorney Jon Kieffer, representing several schools in the case, states, “The devastation and damage that JUUL has created, with teen-targeted advertising and marketing, and youth-focused products, has created a huge problem for many schools. JUUL has deliberately designed a product that attracts kids and then hooks them.”

Schools Unite Against JUUL

IPS is not alone in its fight against JUUL. Nearly a dozen Indiana school districts have joined the lawsuit, including Carmel Clay Schools, Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation, South Bend Community School Corporation, and others. These districts are taking a stand to protect their students from the harmful effects of vaping.

Michael J. Kerschner, a member of the Carmel schools board, emphasizes the importance of prioritizing students in decision-making: “JUUL, to the detriment of our students, has been marketing directly to teens to get them addicted to their product. This litigation is taking a stand against JUUL and other manufacturers.”

JUUL’s Response

JUUL, headquartered in California, has refrained from commenting on the lawsuit directly. The [vape company](#) has attempted to position itself as a provider of safer alternatives to traditional cigarettes for adult smokers. JUUL claims to support efforts to reduce underage tobacco use and has settled numerous lawsuits in other states that alleged illegal targeting of young people in their marketing.

Joe Murillo, chief regulatory officer at JUUL, stated in response to the 2021 National Youth Tobacco Survey, “Over the past several years, we reset our company because while millions of adult smokers have converted to our products from cigarettes, we will only be trusted to provide alternatives to adult smokers if we continue to combat underage use, respect the central role of our regulator, and build on our shared commitment to science and evidence.”

Conclusion

The lawsuit against JUUL by Indianapolis Public Schools and other districts in Indiana sheds light on the serious issue of teen vaping. The allegations of deliberate targeting and harm to students have spurred these schools to take legal action. As the case progresses through federal court in California, the outcome will have significant implications for the e-cigarette industry and the health of young people across the country.

FAQs

1. **What is the lawsuit about?**

- The lawsuit accuses JUUL, a popular e-cigarette brand, of targeting teenagers in their marketing and contributing to an increase in youth e-cigarette use.

2. Why are Indianapolis Public Schools and other districts joining the lawsuit?

- These school districts believe that JUUL's marketing tactics have had a detrimental impact on their students' health and well-being, and they seek to hold the company accountable.

3. What evidence supports the allegations against JUUL?

- The lawsuit claims that JUUL employed strategies similar to those used by the tobacco industry, such as using young models and appealing flavors to attract teenagers.

4. How many Indiana districts have joined the lawsuit?

- Nearly a dozen Indiana school districts, including Indianapolis Public Schools, Carmel Clay Schools, and Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation, have joined the lawsuit.

5. What is JUUL's response to the allegations?

- JUUL has not directly commented on the lawsuit but has positioned itself as a provider of safer alternatives to traditional cigarettes for adult smokers while stating support for efforts to combat underage tobacco use.