



# *School Resource Officer*

*By Officer Joshua Horner, North High School SRO*

## **Nicotine Trends**

As the world advances, so do the ways people use nicotine products. The tobacco industry has evolved from cigarettes and cigars to electronic means in the form of e-cigarettes. E-cigarettes have gained popularity across the U.S. with all age groups, but especially with youth.

E-cigarette is an umbrella term that refers to a variety of devices; however, the most common term you will hear youth use is “vape.” Other names include “e-cigs,” “e-hookahs,” “mods,” “vape pens,” “tank systems” and “electronic nicotine delivery systems.” Just like any other trend among youth, new slang terms are created to refer to vaping and vaping supplies. With that in mind, it is important for parents and other adults to listen for any terms that sound unfamiliar to them.

Vapes produce an aerosol by heating up a liquid that typically contains some form of nicotine. This is paired with flavorings which are inhaled into the lungs. After the aerosol is exhaled by the user it can be inhaled by bystanders. While nicotine vapes are popular among youth, there has been an increase in recent years of vapes containing other liquid such as THC (found in marijuana).

The bottom line is that there is no safe vaping product whether it’s liquid nicotine or another drug. Inhaling any form of heated aerosol is dangerous for the body. Health effects of vaping include increased blood pressure and heart rate and the narrowing of arteries which could possibly lead to a heart attack. When other substances are added to vapes, a whole different array of side effects can occur.

There are new e-cigarettes that look and function similarly to the devices mentioned above but they are marketed as “diffusers.” Companies claim these “diffusers” contain no nicotine and are meant to deliver other things like melatonin, caffeine, CBD, etc. Just like nicotine vapes, these are commonly designed to look like other objects you might find in a typical teen’s backpack. They can look like lip balms, highlighters, pencil lead, etc. and they also come in the same fruity flavors as typical nicotine vapes. For example, Nutrohaler claims that its products are not marketed to youth but they also offer the ability to “get paid” while using them in TikToks.

Kids often think these are healthier/safer and will not get them in trouble because companies claim the products do not contain nicotine or illegal substances, but they have all the other same harmful ingredients.



# *School Resource Officer, continued*

In the City of Fargo, these types of diffusers are still citable based off the language of our city ordinance. They are in the same category of cigarettes or e-cigarettes.

Between the use of fun fruity flavors and easily concealable designs, these devices threaten a nicotine addiction to a new generation. The adolescent brain does not fully develop until around age 25. Those who try nicotine while their brain is still developing have a higher likelihood of becoming addicted and this increases their risk of addiction to other substances they may try in the future.

This article offers a very brief overview of e-cigarettes. As a parent or adult interacting with youth, it is important to familiarize yourself with them as the more you know about these devices and the harms of nicotine addiction, the more you will be able to help the kids around you. There are multiple areas to find more information, with a select few listed below:

- [PAVE](#)
- [Scholastic](#)
- [Truth Initiative](#)
- [Fargo Cass Public Health](#)

