



ENDING BIG TOBACCO'S INFLUENCE

OUR PROGRESS TO ACHIEVE
A CULTURE WHERE YOUNG
PEOPLE REJECT SMOKING,
VAPING, AND NICOTINE

**FACT:
VAPING
NICOTINE
CAN
AMPLIFY
FEELINGS
OF STRESS**

Breathe

TABLE OF CONTENTS

04

LETTER FROM THE CEO & PRESIDENT

06

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT PUBLIC EDUCATION

13

RESEARCH & POLICY

22

COMMUNITY & YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

28

INNOVATIONS TO QUIT SMOKING AND VAPING

36

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

LETTER FROM CEO & PRESIDENT ROBIN KOVAL



Nearly a decade ago, I opened this letter — my first as CEO & President of Truth Initiative® — with a firm belief about our work to create a tobacco-free generation: **Ambitious — yes. Achievable? Absolutely.** Ten years later, I have even more confidence in our mission to achieve a culture in which young people reject smoking, vaping, and nicotine.

Our progress in 2022 caps off a decade of remarkable achievements in changing behavior, influencing culture, and saving lives. In the last 10 years, we relaunched the **truth**® campaign, preventing millions of young people from becoming smokers and helping drive the youth smoking rate to a historic low of around 2%. We became a leader in the fight against the youth e-cigarette use crisis, protecting youth at risk of nicotine addiction. We expanded the **truth** brand to include innovative, evidence-based quitting tools and resources designed to protect and empower young people to live nicotine-free lives. We also successfully translated our youth

prevention and education expertise to address our nation's opioid crisis with the Emmy® Award-winning *The Truth About Opioids* campaign, which has been proven to increase knowledge of the risks of opioid misuse among youth and young adults and decrease attitudes around stigma.

In just the last year, through our public education efforts, community-level and youth activism programs, evidence-proven quit tools, and field-leading research, we engaged and empowered millions to live free from smoking, vaping, and nicotine addiction. Our *It's Messing with Our Heads* **truth** campaign continued to expose the connection between vaping nicotine and youth mental health, leading to lower odds of youth e-cigarette use and intentions to use in the future, according to peer-reviewed research published in *Tobacco Control*. The study is the first to show a relationship between e-cigarette prevention messaging exposure and lowered e-cigarette use among youth and young

adults. This is Quitting®, our first-of-its-kind quit vaping program from **truth**, reached the major milestone of helping more than half a million young people on their journeys to quit vaping nicotine. Our national youth e-cigarette prevention curriculum *Vaping: Know the truth* is now actively engaging nearly 700,000 students with the facts about vaping nicotine to help them make informed choices. These big achievements to reverse the youth nicotine use crisis once again earned us a spot on Fast Company's annual list of the World's Most Innovative Companies for 2022.

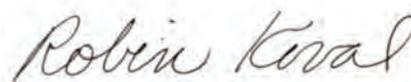
We also continue to be a leading and life-saving resource for the many adult tobacco users who want to quit. BecomeAnEX, our free, digital quit-smoking plan and online community, is now supporting the quit journeys of more than 940,000 adult smokers. The EX Program, our enterprise tobacco cessation program, is reaching more than 10 million people through employers, health insurers, and healthcare providers, as well as through Medicaid plans in four states.

More 2022 highlights detailed in the report include:

- As part of the **truth** Moment of Action for Mental Health, 300,000 young people took action to declare vaping nicotine a mental health issue. Throughout the year, young **truth** activists called attention to the impact that vaping nicotine is having on their generation and met with decision makers throughout the country.
- The Truth Initiative Tobacco/Vape-Free College Program has now helped 147 institutions adopt tobacco-free policies, protecting 1.4 million students, faculty, and staff each year.
- Our Truth Initiative Schroeder Institute broke new ground with 30 peer-reviewed articles, Truth Initiative reports, and submissions of comments to federal agencies.

- The Truth Initiative Impact Series convened multiple events with renowned public health experts — including the Director of the Center for Tobacco Control at the FDA, Dr. Brian King — about ways we can achieve a culture where young people reject smoking, vaping, and nicotine. To date, the Truth Initiative Impact Series has garnered more than 750,000 views.
- We continued our commitment to protect scientific integrity in research on commercial tobacco and nicotine products and raised awareness of Big Tobacco's reinvigorated efforts to infiltrate scientific spaces. We published peer-reviewed research and editorials on the topic, held a Truth Initiative Impact Series event focused on the issue, and led a steering committee of academic and policy leaders.

As I prepare to retire in October of 2023 and conclude my 10-year tenure as CEO and President, I am so very proud of our achievements over the last year and decade. It has been my profound honor to lead Truth Initiative and its lifesaving work. None of it would have been possible without our hardworking staff, Board of Directors, and vital partners. Our mission of achieving a culture where all young people reject smoking, vaping, and nicotine remains both ambitious and achievable, and as I step back from my current role, I know Truth Initiative will continue to make strides to end the influence and impact of the tobacco industry and create the first tobacco-free generation. Throughout all the important and lifesaving achievements to come for this unique and groundbreaking organization, I will be loudly cheering on from the sidelines with gratitude and love.



Robin Koval, CEO and President



YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT PUBLIC EDUCATION[®]

Inspiring a new
generation with the truth





Our nationally recognized, award-winning **truth** brand, with 70% awareness among young people, is empowering youth and young adults to make informed choices and influence their peers and communities to do the same — and end Big Tobacco's influence for good. The longest running and proven effective national youth tobacco prevention campaign, **truth** delivers the facts about smoking, vaping, and nicotine use and connects young people to free programs, including our evidence-based, first-of-its-kind quit vaping program This is Quitting from **truth** and our digital peer-to-peer curriculum *Vaping: Know the truth*.

As the youth e-cigarette public health crisis continues with more than 2.5 million high school and middle students vaping, peer-reviewed research shows that awareness of **truth** is making a big impact. According to a *Tobacco Control* study that is the first to show a relationship between e-cigarette prevention messaging exposure and lowered e-cigarette use among youth and young adults, **truth** led to lower odds of both youth e-cigarette use and intentions to use in the future.

Young people know and trust the truth brand, which has approximately 70% awareness among the target audience.

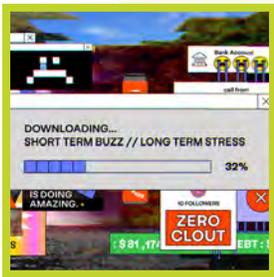
BREATH OF STRESS AIR



We continue to expose nicotine's role as a contributor to the worsening youth mental health crisis with our campaign *It's Messing with Our Heads*, which is designed to denormalize vaping nicotine and normalize quitting. The campaign debuted in October 2021 with the launch of a fake vaping company called Depression Stick! and the challenge: "What if tobacco companies told the truth about how nicotine can amplify feelings of depression and anxiety?" The latest installment of the campaign, *Breath of Stress Air*, launched in 2022 and continues the theme by exposing the tobacco industry's deception of selling nicotine as a way to deal with stress when, in fact, vaping nicotine can make stress feel worse.



Since its launch during the 2022 NCAA March Madness basketball tournament, *Breath of Stress Air* has received widespread press coverage including a feature segment on NBC's digital and broadcast news properties — "NBC Now" and the "TODAY" show — reaching nearly 360 million viewers, including a large youth and young adult audience through NBC's Snapchat "Stay Tuned" program. To expand its reach, we aired the campaign during the Thanksgiving Day New York Giants and Dallas Cowboys game, which was the most-watched regular season NFL game ever with an audience of 42 million viewers. In its first year, *Breath of Stress Air* maintained consistently high brand awareness and brand equity, and spurred important attitudinal shifts that we know impact behavior change. These include shifts related to the perceived risk of vaping nicotine, anti-industry sentiment, and non-vaping identity. Expansion of the campaign is ongoing through 2023 and it continues to receive a strong reception from our audience.



BREATH OF STRESS AIR COLLECTIVE BREATH

As part of the *Breath of Stress Air* campaign, **truth** partnered with the app Breathwrk for a custom breathing exercise called "No Worries" that was shared on thetruth.com and social media, including an interactive Snapchat lens. On April 27, young **truth** activists, including former e-cigarette users, led peers across the country in a "collective breath" via Instagram Live using the breathing exercise to mobilize young people nationwide to demand that decision makers declare youth nicotine use a mental health issue. More than 300,000 and counting total symbolic breaths have been taken, with each breath signaling that young people want the FDA, White House, and all decision makers to stand against the vaping industry's predatory tactics and addictive products that have negatively impacted their generation's physical and mental health. The effort was part of a larger youth activism event called Moment of Action for Mental Health (see page 27 for more).



INSPIRING AND SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE TO QUIT

truth continues to support young people who want to quit vaping nicotine by sharing the stories of what quitting really looks like and connecting them to This is Quitting, our free and anonymous text messaging program that is helping more than half a million youth and young adults on their journey to quit vaping.

We released five new episodes of our powerful testimonial series “Quitters,” which provides an honest and authentic look into the real-life experiences of a diverse group of young people and offers an inspirational and empathetic message for others beginning their quitting journeys. We also partnered with several TikTok influencers, including McCall Mirabella (@mccallmirabella), who shared her experience quitting vaping and launched a quit challenge to her more than 750,000 followers. Through This is Quitting messages written by her, an invite to her exclusive quitting Discord community, and the chance to win prizes and rewards along the quit journey, she encouraged 2,500 young people to enroll in This is Quitting in the first six days of her challenge alone. Other partnerships with TikTok influencers helped spread awareness of the connection between nicotine and mental health by featuring healthy ways to deal with stress. As part of the partnership, Jessee (@whateverjess), a visual artist with more than 724,000 followers, created an original painting, and Neena (@neenarosemusic), a singer with nearly a million followers, wrote a song for us.



“I feel so happy I made this choice and got to go on this journey with my partner. When I’m not vaping, I feel like my best self.”

– Josh



“I know now that I don’t need nicotine to get through my day. I can focus on healthy outlets to cope with stress like meditating, deep breathing, or just being present with friends and loved ones.”

– Will

For the many other young people who are quitting e-cigarettes and sharing their journeys on social media, **truth** lifts them up by encouraging them, celebrating their progress, and sharing resources. In just three months, **truth** reached out to hundreds of individuals who posted about quitting vaping, generating over 2 million engagements as these quitters shared their posts. For example, **truth** engaged with Georgia (geoleejohn) on TikTok as she documented her 65-day quit journey, rewarding herself for every vape-free day by hanging a tiny disco ball in her bedroom. We cheered her on, sent **truth** merchandise, and on her 14th nicotine-free day, celebrated her success with a gift of a full-size disco ball. Georgia received 11 million views on her quitting posts. These community interactions are an important way **truth** helps young people know they are not alone as they commit to quitting.



“If you’re struggling to quit vaping, just know that once you make it out the other side, you’re free from it, once and for all.”

– Sophia



“I would consider myself a really positive and healthy person so even I’m surprised at how deep this vaping habit went and how much I let it affect me. Nobody’s immune to it but everyone can take themselves out of it.”

– Bryan

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

truth influences culture through key strategic partnerships with leading and innovative youth-focused brands and creators. Here are a few of our 2022 collaborations.



VidCon

We co-sponsored VidCon, a four-day global gathering of creators and fans of online video content and created a space for attendees focused on mental health. Three VidCon featured content creators — Alan Chikin Chow, MeganPlays, and Andre Swilley — stopped by to capture content sharing our Breath of Stress Air message with their audiences.



Adult Swim

Our video collaboration with cable cartoon network Adult Swim depicts a climactic battle between an anime hero and villain, symbolic of how tobacco companies market their products as stress relievers. The video aired on Adult Swim and the network’s social channels.



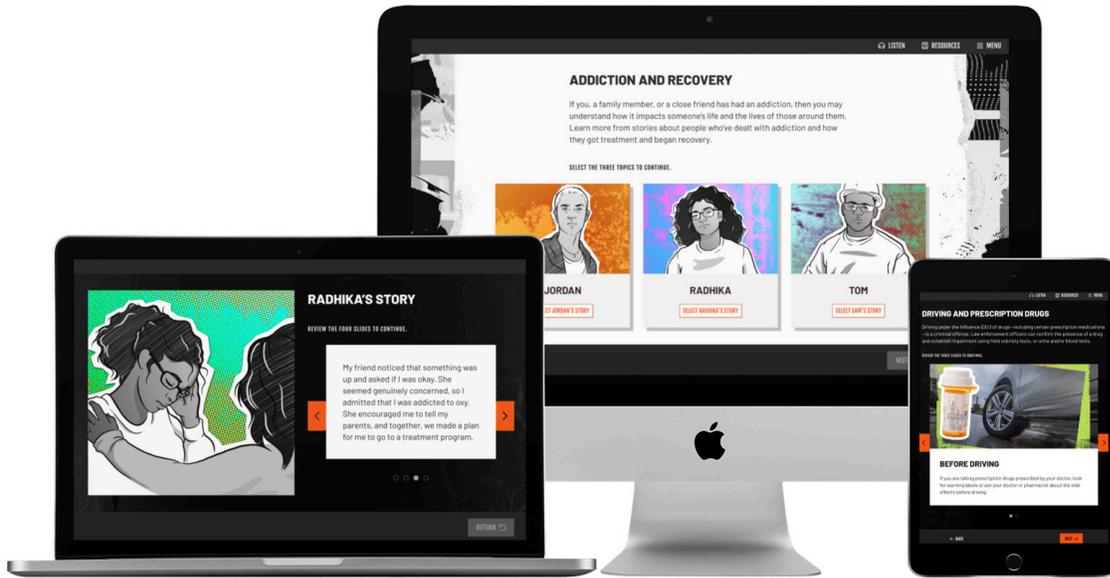
The Onion

We partnered with The Onion to create a parody music video of tobacco industry execs singing about two of their favorite topics: innovation and vapes. “Inno-vape-tion” uses the industry’s own words and blends in the truth about its products and tactics — and even contains a few TikTok dance routines to show just how “with it” vape companies try to be to recruit young users. The video gained almost 10 million impressions.



Sneaker Queen

truth launched a limited-edition streetwear line in collaboration with the custom sneaker and apparel artist Mikaela, aka the Sneaker Queen. Mikaela, whose hand-painted designs were inspired by the topic of mental health, told **truth** she uses her art to cope with stress and anxiety and doesn’t vape nicotine because she knows it can intensify those feelings.



THE TRUTH ABOUT OPIOIDS

We continue to contribute youth prevention and education expertise to combat America's opioid misuse epidemic and have been raising awareness of the efficacy of our Emmy award-winning campaign *The Truth About Opioids*. Peer-reviewed research shows that this prevention effort successfully increased knowledge of the fact that opioid dependence can happen after just five days, decreased stigma, and increased the likelihood to seek and share opioid-related information to young people. The findings, published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, show that the nationally recognized **truth** campaign can successfully be adapted to spread the word about opioid misuse, and that public education about opioids delivered at a national level could positively impact millions of young people. We are also expanding the reach of *The Truth About Opioids* with a peer-to-peer opioid misuse prevention digital curriculum for Fall 2023, modeled after the success of *Vaping: Know the truth*.



RESEARCH & POLICY

Ground-breaking research,
grounded in science



30

**Peer-reviewed
articles published**

Truth Initiative Schroeder Institute produces field-leading research and policy analyses that power everything we do. Our researchers investigate the latest issues and trends in tobacco use, analyze policies that can protect communities, and evaluate the impact of our efforts to make tobacco and nicotine addiction a thing of the past. In 2022, we published 30 peer-reviewed articles – in prestigious academic journals such as *JAMA Open*, *Tobacco Control*, *Preventive Medicine*, *Journal of Adolescent Health*, and *Nicotine & Tobacco Research* – research reports, and comments to federal agencies on a range of priorities spanning e-cigarettes, flavor policies, tobacco industry interference, tobacco imagery in entertainment, and beyond.

12

Reports released

We share our findings widely to inform and drive the public conversation around tobacco use and the industry behind it. Our work in 2022 received major media coverage, including in USA Today, NBC News, The TODAY Show, The CBS Evening News, The Associated Press, Bloomberg, and Mashable, just to name a few. Our Truth Initiative Impact Series, a recurring convening that brings together key stakeholders to engage in thought-provoking conversations, featured top experts, including a conversation with Dr. Brian King, Director of FDA's Center for Tobacco Products, and covered important issues, such as strategies to protect scientific integrity from the tobacco industry's renewed assaults. Our research also made center stage at scientific conferences across the country, including the National Conference on Tobacco or Health, and was discussed at annual meetings of the Society for Research on Nicotine & Tobacco, the Society of Behavioral Medicine, and the American Public Health Association.

14

**Comments to
federal agencies**

FLAVORED TOBACCO PRODUCTS

With many flavored products still on the market and attracting young users, Truth Initiative remains a leader in research and analysis on flavors and continues to call for comprehensive policies that eliminate all types of flavored tobacco products that appeal to youth.

As the FDA works to finalize the proposed rules announced in April 2022 to remove menthol cigarettes and all flavored cigars from the market – a historic action we have long been calling for – we continue to provide policy analyses and research to inform the process. These rules have the potential to save millions of lives, especially Black lives and those of other people who have been targeted for decades by the tobacco industry. The rules do not, however, address menthol or other flavored e-cigarettes popular with youth and the FDA has yet to complete its review of e-cigarette marketing applications, allowing these products to remain on the market while it completes its reviews.

We published extensively on flavored tobacco products and policies in 2022 and found:

- Sales restrictions on flavored tobacco products, including menthol products, continued to gain momentum at the local and state level in 2022. Our [quarterly breakdown on U.S. jurisdictions with policies on flavored tobacco products](#) found that by the end of December 2022, 386 localities and three Native American tribes have placed some type of restriction on flavored tobacco products.
- More than 90% of disposable e-cigarettes sold in 2022, which come in many flavors and are the most popular type of e-cigarette among young people, contained the highest levels of nicotine (5% or greater nicotine strength) according to research published in [Nicotine and Tobacco Research](#) by the Centers for Disease Control and Truth Initiative.
- Sales of e-cigarettes in “cooling” flavors like menthol, ice, cool, frost, chill, or freeze rose by nearly 700% and their U.S. market share doubled to 55% between 2017 and 2021, according to findings [published in Tobacco Control](#) by the CDC Foundation in collaboration with Truth Initiative.
- The proportion of menthol-flavored e-cigarette ads sent by email more than doubled from 22.5% to 52.2% following implementation of the FDA’s 2020 policy that restricted flavored e-cigarettes but not menthol-flavored products, according to Truth Initiative research [published in Tobacco Control](#).

386

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90%+

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CENTERING EQUITY IN FLAVOR POLICIES

A [commentary](#) published in *Preventive Medicine* by [researchers at Truth Initiative and the University of Kentucky Markey Cancer Center](#) emphasizes the important role tobacco researchers can play, working in close collaboration with policy advocates and communities, in ensuring that flavor policies are viewed through an equity lens – from selection of communities, to formulation of policies, and to their adoption, implementation/enforcement, and evaluation. Our commentary calls for tobacco control researchers to consider equity throughout the policymaking process to ensure flavored tobacco policies are as effective as possible and reduce health disparities.



PROLIFERATION OF NEW TOBACCO PRODUCTS

As the tobacco industry expands its product offerings to include not only e-cigarettes, but also flavored nicotine-containing products such as oral nicotine pouches and lozenges, and the heated tobacco device IQOS, Truth Initiative monitors and investigates these new products and industry tactics. For example, research co-authored by Truth Initiative and [published in *Tobacco Control*](#) finds that ads for nicotine pouches such as Zyn, On! and Velo often highlight flavors and suggest that they are less harmful than traditional tobacco products – themes that may appeal to youth and young adults.

Companies have also begun to use [synthetic nicotine](#) – created in a laboratory and not derived from tobacco – raising regulatory challenges and health concerns. Although the FDA gained the authority to regulate synthetic nicotine as a



tobacco product on April 14, 2022, many products remain on the market even after being denied marketing authorization. In 2022, Truth Initiative and its partners urged the FDA's Center for Tobacco Products to act against new synthetic nicotine tobacco products that have received marketing denial orders yet remain on the market illegally, including youth appealing flavored e-cigarettes.



EXAMINING E-CIGARETTE USE DISPARITIES

As part of our continued work on tobacco use disparities, we produced a report in 2022, "[Rising vaping rates among lesbian, gay, and bisexual young people outpace peers, widening tobacco use gap](#)," that finds a troubling trend in e-cigarette use. Between 2020 and 2021, e-cigarette use rates rose at higher rates among lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth compared to heterosexual youth. Research has long shown that lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals use tobacco products at [higher rates than their heterosexual peers](#), due, in part, to decades of tobacco industry efforts to target this population. We call for measures to address these disparities, including targeted research, cessation programs, and policy interventions to reduce vaping use and initiation among youth.



NICOTINE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH

Following our comprehensive report on the connections between nicotine use and mental health – "[Colliding Crises: Youth Mental Health and Nicotine Use](#)" – we published "[Nicotine Use and Stress](#)" focused on dispelling some of the myths surrounding nicotine as a stress-reliever. The new resource complemented our Breath of Stress Air campaign, which set out to let young people know that vaping nicotine can increase feelings of stress and anxiety even though some vape companies market their products as stress relievers. We drove home the point that nicotine use does not alleviate stress in the long-term and instead can trap users in a cycle of nicotine withdrawal.

TOBACCO INDUSTRY INTERFERENCE

Truth Initiative continues to expose the tobacco industry's tactics to overhaul its reputation and prop up the narrative that it is on the side of public health. In 2022, we authored several important pieces on the topic, including in the journal [Tobacco Control](#) where we revealed how tobacco companies have used major news outlets including *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post* to makeover their corporate image, spending millions on ads designed to reposition them as aligned with public health even though many publishers have policies in place prohibiting tobacco-sponsored content. Board member Dr. Howard Koh co-authored two op-eds in JAMA and STAT News calling out the tobacco industry's hypocrisy for co-opting harm reduction as a profit protection strategy while continuing to market and sell deadly combustible cigarettes that cause the harm in the first place.

We also exposed how the tobacco industry has reinvigorated its efforts to infiltrate scientific spaces and mislead the public in [an editorial in the American Journal of Public Health](#), which documents tactics that mirror those the industry used for decades to deceive the public about the health risks of cigarettes. We are playing a leading role in calling for strengthening practices to protect scientific research from tobacco industry influence on scientific and regulatory efforts. Truth Initiative established a steering committee in 2021 comprised of academic and policy leaders in tobacco control to work collaboratively to protect and increase scientific integrity in research on commercial tobacco and nicotine products and we continue to advance these efforts.



MISINFORMATION ABOUT NICOTINE

Health misinformation, including false information about nicotine, has been rampant during the COVID-19 pandemic. Truth Initiative published the resource "[Nicotine and the Young Brain](#)" in 2022 to provide evidence-based health information about the harms of nicotine and conducted extensive research on misinformation about nicotine. For example, a Truth Initiative study [published in the Journal of Medical Internet Research](#) found that content about the ability of tobacco, nicotine, or vaping to treat or prevent COVID-19 was shared broadly on Twitter, and that there is a large pro-vaping perspective across these conversations on this social media platform.



47%
of top movies
contain tobacco
imagery

TOBACCO-FREE SCREENS

Since Truth Initiative first sounded the alarm on tobacco imagery in entertainment with our 2018 report, entertainment companies and creators have faced increasing pressure from public health organizations, policymakers, and public officials to do more to address tobacco imagery and its impact on youth. In our fifth annual report, we find that tobacco imagery maintained its recurring role in popular on-screen entertainment in 2021, alongside some incremental progress. The imagery remains pervasive despite research linking tobacco imagery with youth initiation, including a landmark Truth Initiative study published in *Preventive Medicine* that found that high exposure to smoking imagery through episodic programming can triple a young person's odds of starting to vape nicotine. The report, "[Tobacco's Starring Role: How on-screen tobacco imagery drives youth e-cigarette use and what the entertainment industry can do to change the picture](#)" finds:

- **60%** of the 15 most popular shows among 15- to 24-year-olds contain tobacco imagery
- **47%** of top movies contain tobacco imagery
- **12.8%** of music videos for the top Billboard songs of the year contain tobacco imagery

Truth Initiative's Tobacco-Free Screens Coalition works with local community agencies and state and national partners to eliminate tobacco product use on screens and helps educate the entire entertainment media industry of the harmful effects of on-screen tobacco imagery for young people. As a result of our research and outreach, state and federal officials, including the National Association of Attorneys General and a group of U.S. senators, have repeatedly urged industry leaders to take greater action to limit youth exposure to tobacco imagery given the public health consequences.

TRUTH INITIATIVE IMPACT SERIES

Our Truth Initiative Impact Series brought together experts and key stakeholders in conversations about how we can innovate and inspire action to achieve a culture where young people reject smoking, vaping, and nicotine. To date, the Truth Initiative Impact Series has garnered more than 750,000 views.

A Conversation with Dr. Brian King and Truth Initiative CEO Robin Koval

**Dr. Brian King,
Director of
FDA's Center for
Tobacco Products**

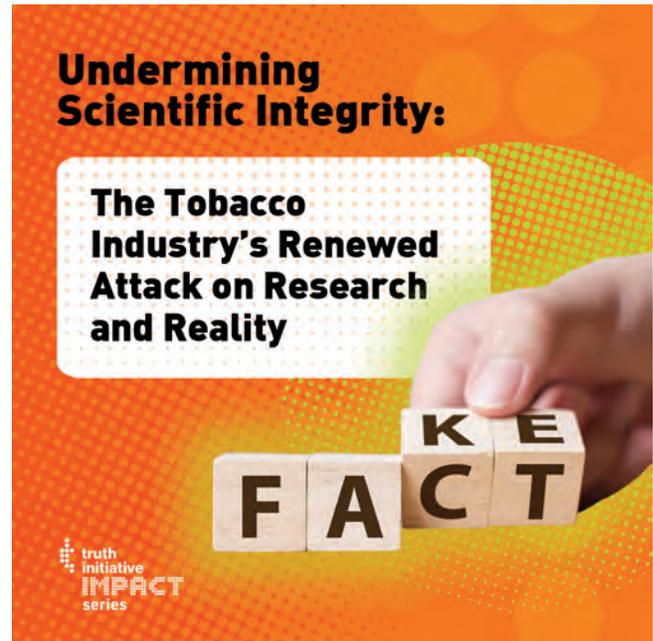


**truth
initiative
IMPACT
series**

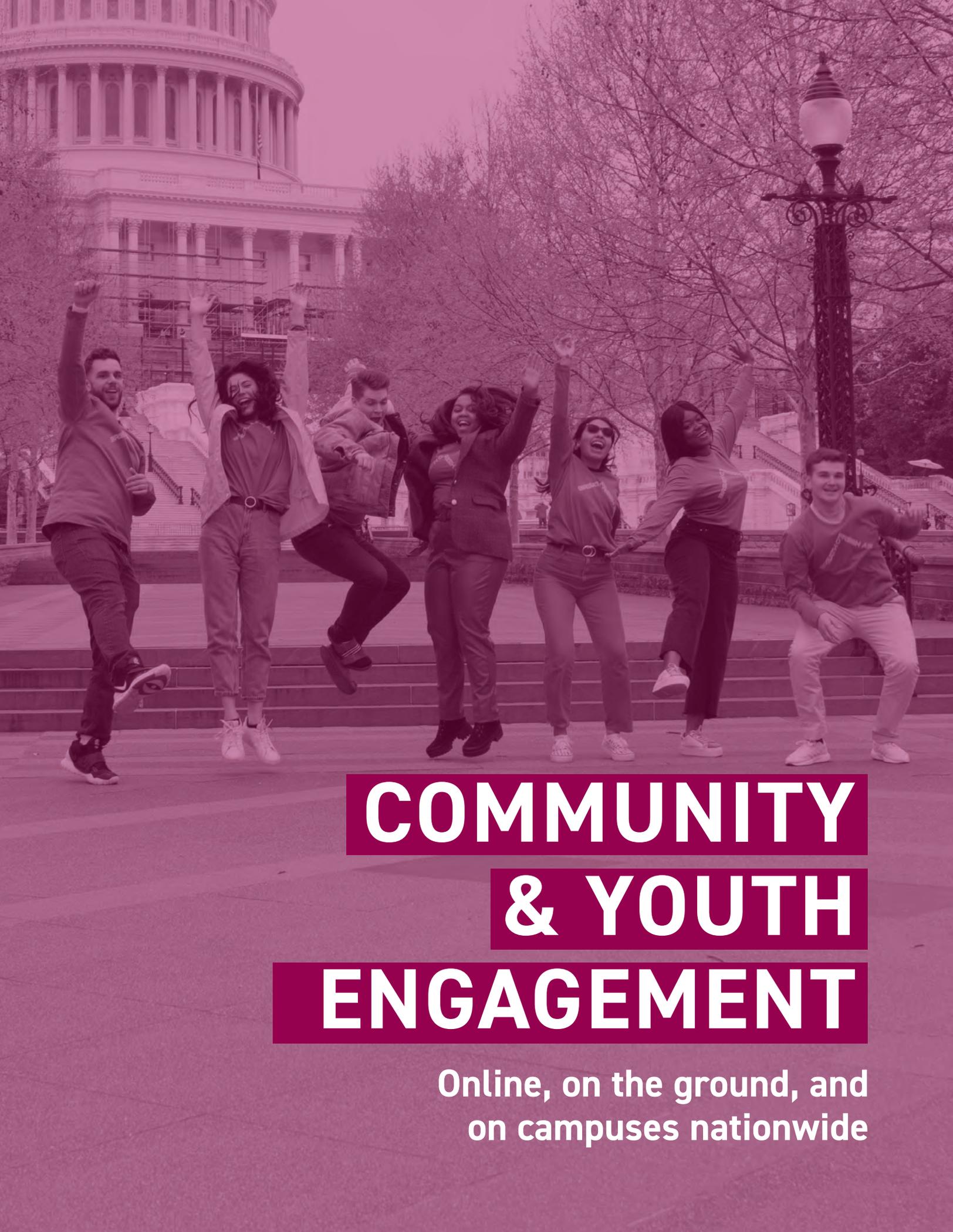
A Conversation with FDA's Center for Tobacco Products Director Dr. Brian King and Truth Initiative CEO and President Robin Koval featured a one-on-one chat about some of the most pressing issues facing the Center for Tobacco Products and its vision for the regulation of tobacco products. The discussion took place during a time when the center was working to finalize proposed rules to remove menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars from the market, reviewing thousands of pre-market tobacco product applications from e-cigarette manufacturers, and planning to propose a rule to reduce nicotine in cigarettes to non-addictive levels.



Nicotine Nation: How the Tobacco Industry May be Addicting a New Generation and Keeping Americans Hooked discussed ways new tobacco products threaten to reverse years of progress made toward ending nicotine addiction and the evolution of “Big Tobacco” into “Big Nicotine.” The event featured Dr. Jonathan D. Klein, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research at the University of Illinois Chicago; Dr. Nora D. Volkow, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse; and Lauren Etter, investigative reporter for Bloomberg News and author of *The Devil’s Playbook: Big Tobacco, Juul, and the Addiction of a New Generation* as moderator.



Undermining Scientific Integrity: The Tobacco Industry’s Renewed Assault on Research and Reality covered the tobacco industry’s attempts to influence public perception about e-cigarettes and nicotine by infiltrating prestigious research journals and research conferences. Panelists included Dr. Barbara Schillo, Senior Vice President of the Schroeder Institute at Truth Initiative; Dr. Robert K. Jackler, professor at the Stanford University School of Medicine; Shawn Otto, author of *The War on Science*; Dr. Pebbles Fagan, Director of the Center for the Study of Tobacco at the Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health – Arkansas; and moderator Ben Stockton, a U.S. correspondent with The Bureau of Investigative Journalism.



COMMUNITY

& YOUTH

ENGAGEMENT

Online, on the ground, and
on campuses nationwide



We empower young people to spread the truth in their communities and campuses nationwide, educate middle and high school students on the risks of tobacco and nicotine, and provide grants to colleges and universities to enact tobacco-free policies.

780,560

students engaged to learn the facts about e-cigarette use and nicotine addiction

TOBACCO/VAPE-FREE COLLEGE PROGRAM

Since 2015, the Truth Initiative Tobacco/Vape-Free College Program has awarded more than \$2.5 million in funding to 220 institutions, protecting more than 1.4 million students, faculty, and staff each year. With 99% of smokers starting by age 26 and the youth vaping crisis continuing, college campuses are critical to preventing young adults from starting tobacco use, aiding current smokers and vapers in quitting, and reducing exposure to secondhand smoke for all.

Colleges receive funding of up to \$20,000 to support the adoption and implementation of a 100% tobacco/vape-free policy and to form a taskforce to assess tobacco-related issues, promote tobacco cessation, and develop policy recommendations. The program also works with student leaders to help develop and lead engagement, educate and organize their peers, and build a movement to become a tobacco-free campus. These college leaders undergo training from Truth Initiative in tobacco prevention and leadership development and become important **truth** activists.

In 2022, we expanded our Tobacco/Vape-Free College Program beyond community colleges and minority-serving institutions and made all colleges and universities in the country eligible. We also welcomed our program's largest college system, Rutgers University, which will impact more than 95,000 students, faculty, and staff with its policy.

220

institutions

have adopted tobacco and vape-free policies

1.4M

students, faculty and staff members

are protected with tobacco and vape-free policies



VAPING: KNOW THE TRUTH

About 700,000 students at over 8,800 schools across the country have actively engaged with our national **truth** branded youth vaping prevention curriculum *Vaping: Know the truth*. Created with Kaiser Permanente and in collaboration with the American Heart Association, our curriculum is available to schools and the public at large at no cost through the leading social impact education innovator, EVERFI. In English and Spanish, the digital, self-led, peer-to-peer interactive course gives young people the facts about e-cigarette use to empower them to never start vaping or to quit through our This is Quitting youth vaping cessation program.

“This course helps me understand the true effects of vaping and how not to get sucked into advertisements.”

—Student, Leon County School District, Florida

“[This course] ... informed me of the misinterpretations of vaping, for instance how it doesn’t actually help with mental health and instead makes it worse.”

—Student, Lincoln Public Schools, Nebraska

“I liked how informative this course was to people like me who don’t know much about the effects vaping has caused environmentally and socially.”

—Student, Frederick County Public Schools, Virginia

THE FIGHT TO ELIMINATE MENTHOL

We welcomed 35 youth activists to Washington, D.C., for our Youth Menthol Convening which provided trainings on policy and advocacy. Activists met with nine congressional offices and participated in the Third National Menthol Conference, co-hosted by Truth Initiative alongside the African American Tobacco Leadership Council, The Center for Black Health Equity, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, and Public Health Law Center. Our Youth Menthol Convening is part of Truth Initiative’s continuing effort to amplify young BIPOC voices, especially in discussions surrounding menthol cigarettes and the disproportionate impact they have on Black Americans.

We also engaged young people to get involved in the FDA rulemaking process to remove menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars from the market. During the public comment period for the rules, we recruited more than 400 young people to submit comments calling for the FDA to finalize and implement their proposed rules without delay. In addition, four of our young activists spoke during FDA virtual listening sessions.



2022 CLASS: TRUTH AMBASSADORS

The 2022 class of **truth** Ambassadors is a diverse group of nine young leaders from across the country, some of whom are continuing their engagement with Truth Initiative after previously serving as Truth Initiative interns and College Leaders. Several of them are also former e-cigarette users.

The truth Ambassador program is a year-long leadership program. Ambassadors work with Truth Initiative staff on recruiting their peers, sharing stories and experiences on tobacco and vaping control issues, and advocating to campus, local, state, and national decision makers to establish tobacco and vape-free communities. Ambassadors receive a stipend to create and promote projects that inspire tobacco-free communities.



Laila Darville, Tennessee

“I wanted to become a **truth** Ambassador because I saw the effects vaping has on my friends’ daily lives and the toll it takes on their mental health.”

Yashi Srivastava, New Jersey

“I want to make sure my siblings aren’t growing up in a community that normalizes smoking and vaping.”



Alyssa Badolato, New Hampshire

“I wanted to become an Ambassador so I can continue to tell my story as a former vaper in an effort to help others.”



Marc J Hawk III, Alabama

“I wanted to become a **truth** Ambassador because I am passionate about making my community and those that surround me tobacco-free!”





MOMENT OF ACTION FOR MENTAL HEALTH

As part of our truth Moment of Action for Mental Health, several of our young activists led a “collective breath” live from the National Mall via Instagram livestream to encourage their peers to send a powerful message to decision makers that vaping nicotine is a mental health issue. Through the livestream and an interactive Snapchat lens — both of which incorporated a custom breathing exercise in partnership with the app Breathwrk encouraging young people to trade stress air for fresh air by quitting vaping — more than 300,000 young people took action with **truth**.

Our leading young activists also met with 15 congressional offices, Assistant Secretary of Health Admiral Rachel Levine and other members of the Biden administration. They carried that momentum over to our post-Moment of Action satellite media tour of more than 30 television and radio interviews with national media outlets and local stations across the country to discuss vaping and mental health.

TRUTH IMPACT SCHOLARSHIP

Five young tobacco control activists received the **truth** Impact Scholarship in April for speaking out about the harms of e-cigarettes. The winners of the \$3,000 scholarship were Pascal Bakari, Jake Warn, Ellie Burmeister, Alyson Yee, and Xavier Lynum.



A woman with curly hair, wearing a puffer jacket and carrying a backpack, is hiking through a forest. She is looking up and to the right with a smile. The background is a dense forest with sunlight filtering through the trees.

INNOVATIONS TO QUIT SMOKING AND VAPING

**Digital cessation
programs that save lives**



We are reaching millions of people with our leading, evidence-based quit programs, including young e-cigarette users as well as combustible tobacco smokers who want to live free from addiction to tobacco products.

500K+

teens and young adults have enrolled in our free quit vaping text message program, This is Quitting



THIS IS QUITTING

This is Quitting propelled past 500,000 enrollees thanks to powerful **truth** campaign messaging and strategic partnerships with states, health plans, and other youth-serving organizations. The free and anonymous text messaging program designed to help young people quit vaping features messages from other young people like them who have attempted to, or successfully quit, e-cigarettes. Between 300-700 young people enroll in the program every day, and over 10,000 This is Quitting users have contributed to the program's development by submitting testimonials and messages, offering inspiration and encouragement to other young people on their quit vaping journey.

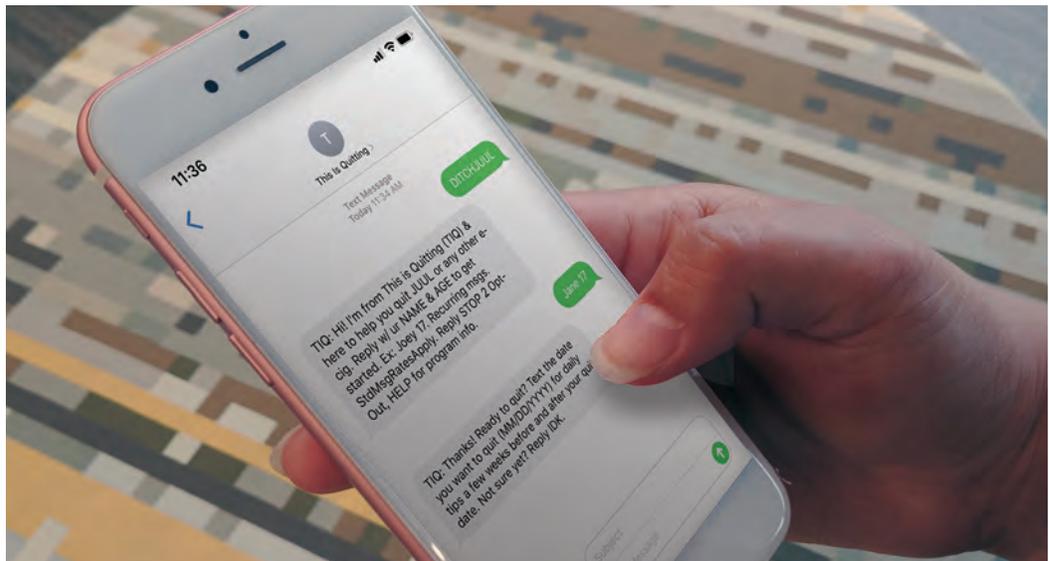
“They give me hope knowing that I am not alone in this process and everyone else is also having a hard time like I am.”

—Young adult / 18-24 year old

“It’s able to help me calm down and guide me through my struggles...They give you advice over how to handle anxiety.”

—Minor / under 18 years old

In 2022, a [Truth Initiative randomized control trial published in *Preventive Medicine*](#) found that using This is Quitting was linked not only with helping young adults successfully quit vaping, but also in preventing later use of combustible tobacco products like cigarettes, cigars, and little cigars/cigarillos in place of e-cigarettes. These findings are especially critical given that young people who had ever used e-cigarettes had seven times higher odds of becoming smokers one year later compared with those who had never vaped, according to another [Truth Initiative study](#).



TIQ PARTNERSHIPS

We work with states and local communities to customize This is Quitting to their unique needs by providing tailored messages, promotional and support materials, comprehensive reporting of uptake, engagement, and quit outcomes, and a unique opt-in keyword for their populations. Our 23 current clients include the states of Alabama, Connecticut, Georgia, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, as well as localities in California, Missouri, Oregon, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. We are also partnered with a large national managed care organization to deliver This is Quitting in 23 states.

We are also launching a collaboration with North Carolina to promote This Is Quitting as part of a three-year effort resulting from their settlement with JUUL, which is expected to help about 1.5 million young people from the state on their journey to quit. It will also serve as a powerful case study as we continue to speak with elected leaders and departments of health across the country to ensure that the \$1.2 billion in funds from JUUL settlements are directed to end the youth e-cigarette crisis with evidence-based programs like ours.

COLLABORATION WITH CRISIS TEXT LINE

We launched a partnership with the Crisis Text Line to provide one-on-one live chat service for This is Quitting users, providing critical services that users have requested. To date, over 5,500 unique users have had over 7,200 conversations with volunteer crisis counselors. This is Quitting users who have used Crisis Text Line report a 92% satisfaction rate, with 55% of texters saying they've shared something with a crisis counselor they've never shared with anyone else before. Crisis Text Line has also provided 15 suicide de-escalations and 10 active rescues for users referred from This is Quitting, demonstrating the serious need for this type of mental health support.

“They helped me a lot and I actually felt really happy when I opened up and shared with them. It made me feel wanted when they understood what was happening in my life.”

—Crisis Text Line TIQ user



“Thanks for your conversation today. It meant a lot. A lot more than you know.”

—Crisis Text Line TIQ user

EX

To date, more than 940,000 people have enrolled in EX, the free, digital quit-smoking plan and online community of current and former tobacco users developed by Truth Initiative in collaboration with Mayo Clinic. Over 2,500 new users enroll each month, developing the skills and confidence to successfully quit, despite the pandemic slowing down quitting trends nationally.

EX expanded its content and reach significantly in 2022, adding substantial sections of new content tailored specifically for parents of teen and young adult vapers, including guidance on how to talk to a teen or young adult, proven quit strategies, and stress management techniques, as well as parent-specific text messages and emails. EX also launched support specifically for smokers trying to quit menthol cigarettes, a product used disproportionately by smokers of color and disadvantaged populations. We are also widely expanding the educational resources and support we offer about quit medications.

Exciting visual and programmatic changes started in earnest this year. We implemented a comprehensive visual design refresh of the web and mobile experience for EX. We have also built a new recommender engine to power tailored recommendations for EX users.

EX continues to be evaluated in rigorous research with external collaborators. Findings from a study [published in *Preventive Medicine*](#) showed engagement with EX improved cessation outcomes for socioeconomically-disadvantaged young adults aged 18-30, with users randomized to receive EX reporting nearly a four-fold increase in self-reported 30-day point prevalence abstinence. Another collaboration with University of Maryland and Sheppard Pratt Hospital to provide EX as a resource

A photograph showing a person's hands holding a smartphone, with the person's face partially visible in the background, looking at the screen. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a person in a blue shirt.

Over 2,500 new users enroll each month, developing the skills and confidence to successfully quit.

to hospitalized patients with serious mental illness is ongoing, with the demonstration phase completed and a pilot randomized trial currently recruiting. Findings thus far will be shared at the upcoming annual meeting for the Schizophrenia International Research Society.

To learn more about quitting with support from EX, visit [BecomeAnEX.org](https://www.becomeanex.org).

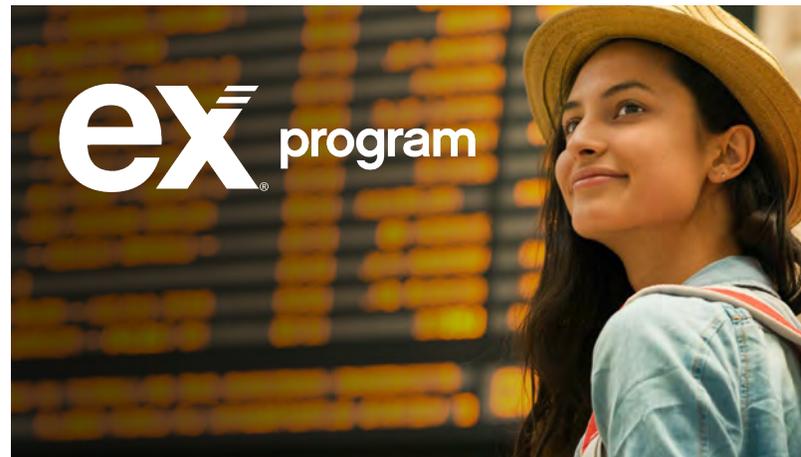
THE EX PROGRAM

The EX Program continues to evolve and expand to provide an exceptional enterprise-level tobacco cessation program designed for employers and health plans, now reaching more than 10.2 million U.S. adults. In 2022, we prioritized creating a seamless live chat experience for users, responding to a nearly 38% increase in users who chat from mobile devices between 2020 and 2021. The program extensively redesigned its user interface and user experience on desktop and mobile, rolled out a powerful machine learning engine to create dynamically tailored recommendations to website users in this new interface, and introduced a new Live Chat companion mobile app. We increased customization of our reporting infrastructure to continue providing our clients with best-in-class access to their members' data, and actionable insights to drive enrollment. To date, EX Coaches have supported members with over 5,000 chat conversations throughout their quit journey. The program continues to extend accessibility by offering these resources in Spanish. Clients using our best practice recommendations are seeing incredible results. For example, B. Braun Medical had 90% of its employees who attested to tobacco use register for the EX Program in 2022. Among those who enrolled, 95% actively engaged in the program.

The EX Program also saw explosive growth in new clients enrolling in the program in 2022, including 15 clients such as the City of Baltimore (~14,000 lives) and business service provider Conduent (~25,000 lives). To date, the EX Program has 73 clients, including some of the largest providers and employers in the country such as Virgin Pulse, Solera, PepsiCo, B. Braun Medical, as well as eight Medicaid markets through a large national managed care organization. For our clients, our expert member marketing team is driving high engagement among tobacco users for the EX Program through

strategic planning, creative campaigns, thoughtful implementation, and rigorous measurement. For example, with one health plan client, the EX Program member marketing team drove a 70% increase in 2022 member enrollments over 2021 numbers, when the plan used a different vendor.

For more information on the EX Program, visit theexprogram.com.



Helping more than
10.2 million adults
around the nation to
quit tobacco.



AWARDS

While we will always measure success by the number of lives saved, we continue to be proud of the top industry awards we receive for our work. Prestigious honors from Fast Company — we were named one of its 10 Most Innovative Not-for-Profit organizations of 2022 — concluded a year that had many recognitions for our creativity, innovation, and efficacy. Below is a selection of awards we received in 2022.

Fast Company's World's Most Innovative Companies 2022

Honoree in Nonprofit category

Advertising Research Foundation
David Ogilvy Awards

Won gold and silver in Social Responsibility category for Quitters and Depression Stick, bronze in Government, Public Service, Nonprofit category for Quitters

PR Purpose Awards

Finalist in Best Use of Digital/Social Media category for Breath of Stress Air, Best Advocacy category for Moment of Action for Mental Health



The Stevies

Won bronze for Achievement in Workforce Development & Learning category, Achievement in Workforce Health & Wellbeing category

Khoros Kudos Awards

Won in Engagement for Good: Healthcare in North America for EX Program

PRWEEK US Awards

Finalist in Best in Influencer and Best in Social Media for #QuitTogether

goDCgo

Won gold level ambassador award for our transportation benefits

Shorty Impact Awards

Won gold in Mental Health category and silver in Public Health/Nonprofit for Quitters



COMMITMENT TO OUR PEOPLE

The key to our continued success is a shared dedication to our core values of courage, curiosity, collaboration, and commitment, which together guide us in fostering an equitable and inclusive workplace. We take pride in the diversity of our staff and constantly work to improve our culture of inclusion in our hiring practices, vendor partnerships, and other areas of engagement to ensure that the people we serve see themselves reflected in our work. We also stand alongside and collaborate with populations disproportionately affected by tobacco including women, people of color, the LGBTQ+ community, members of the military and veterans, people with disabilities, and communities experiencing poverty. We also continued to have robust participation in our organization-wide committees – including our Diversity Committee, Health and Wellness Committee, and Sustainability and Service committee – which contribute to the wellbeing of our workplace and community. Events in 2022 included gatherings in honor of heritage and history months such as Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month and Pride, employee donation drives, and a discussion series on readings related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, to name a few.

Throughout 2022, we continued to invest heavily in our employees to foster their growth professionally and personally. Our in-house training and enrichment series Truth yoU, which helps us learn new skills, expand existing ones, and think and act creatively, offered events for all staff members on a range of topics. These included a panel discussion on applying an equity lens to our tobacco control work, seminars on financial literacy and planning, book talks with notable authors, and our career series “How I Got Here,” which features staff members in discussion with each other about their career journeys and lessons learned along the way.





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TRUTH INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

BALANCE SHEETS

JUNE 30, 2022 AND 2021 (IN THOUSANDS)

ASSETS	2022		2021	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$	196,502	\$	135,135
Investments		632,288		867,443
Trades to be settled		216		75
Accrued interest receivable		244		198
Grants receivable		128		188
Prepaid expenses		1,532		1,945
Property and equipment, net		2,142		2,834
Other assets		541		278
Total	\$	833,593	\$	1,008,096
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS				
Liabilities:				
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$	10,170	\$	11,435
Deferred revenue		674		342
Refundable advance		2,227		3,336
Loans payable		89,030		93,500
Other liabilities		2,290		1,892
Deferred rent		3,048		3,597
Total liabilities	\$	107,439	\$	114,102
Net assets without donor restrictions		726,154		893,994
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$	833,593	\$	1,008,096

TRUTH INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES

YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2022 AND 2021 (IN THOUSANDS)

REVENUE AND SUPPORT	2022		2021	
Sponsored projects and other income	\$	8,160	\$	5,609
Investment (loss) income, net of fees		(62,321)		211,005
Total revenue and support	\$	(54,161)	\$	216,614
EXPENSES				
Program expenses:				
Counter-marketing and public education	\$	74,118	\$	56,115
Communications		4,623		3,674
Truth Initiative Schroeder Institute		9,160		9,026
Innovations		6,977		7,599
Community and youth engagement		5,979		5,470
Program grants		942		939
Other programs		947		996
	\$	102,746	\$	83,819
Supporting services:				
General and administrative	\$	10,933	\$	10,649
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$	113,679	\$	94,468
Change in net assets	\$	(167,840)	\$	122,146
NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS				
Beginning	\$	893,994	\$	771,848
Ending	\$	\$726,154	\$	893,994

TRUTH INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS

YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2022 AND 2021 (IN THOUSANDS)

CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:	2022	2021
Change in net assets	\$ (167,840)	\$ 122,146
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash used in operating activities:		
Realized and unrealized loss (gain) on investments	\$ 77,208	\$ (203,013)
Other investment gain	(8,117)	(5,438)
Depreciation	833	1,093
Amortization of debt issuance costs	255	-
Deferred rent	(549)	(499)
Forgiveness of debt	(3,500)	-
Changes in assets and liabilities:		
(Increase) decrease in:		
Trades to be settled	(141)	36
Accrued interest receivable	(46)	43
Grants receivable	60	(12)
Prepaid expenses	413	(1,043)
Other assets	(263)	(78)
(Decrease) increase in:		
Account payable and accrued expenses	(1,265)	1,893
Deferred revenue	332	146
Refundable advance	(1,109)	(172)
Other liabilities	398	976
Net cash used in operating activities	\$ (103,331)	\$ (83,922)

TRUTH INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS

YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2022 AND 2021 (IN THOUSANDS)

CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:	2022	2021
Purchase of property and equipment	\$ (141)	\$ (128)
Proceeds from sale of investments	377,658	178,181
Purchases of investments	(291,219)	(109,694)
Net cash provided by investing activities	\$ 86,298	\$ 68,359
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:		
Proceeds from loan payable	\$ 90,000	\$ 30,000
Principal repayments on line of credit and loan payable	(90,000)	–
Debt issuance costs	(1,225)	–
Net cash (used in) provided by financing activities	(1,225)	30,000
Net (decrease) increase in cash and cash equivalents	\$ (18,258)	\$ 14,437
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS:		
Beginning	\$ 135,135	\$ 120,698
Ending	\$ 116,877	\$ 135,135
SUPPLEMENTAL DISCLOSURES OF CASH FLOW INFORMATION:		
Cash paid for interest	\$ 1,545	\$ 2,354
Cash paid for income taxes	\$ 45	\$ 504
SUPPLEMENTAL DISCLOSURES OF NONCASH FINANCING ACTIVITIES:		
Forgiveness of debt	\$ 3,500	\$ –

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**truth
initiative**

INSPIRING LIVES
FREE FROM SMOKING,
VAPING & NICOTINE

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