

## **News Release**

April 1, 2024

### **For Immediate Release**

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## **Take Down Tobacco**

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) joins Tobacco-Free Nebraska to encourage kids to Take Down Tobacco on April 1, 2024. This event, sponsored by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, empowers people to stand up and speak out against the tobacco industry. The Take Down Tobacco program is a 365 day a year effort that culminates every spring with the Take Down Tobacco National Day of Action. On this day, youth advocates and their communities come together to stand up to Big Tobacco, expose the tricks this industry uses to lure kids into addiction, and call for change.

Flavored vapes have fueled the youth e-cigarette epidemic, which is reversing decades of progress to reduce tobacco use in the US. The tobacco industry has a long history of targeting youth with flavored products like flavored e-cigarettes, menthol flavored tobacco and flavored cigars. We are on the cusp of ending the sale of menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars, which is a huge step in addressing health inequity and stopping the tobacco industry's targeting of kids and Black Americans. We must continue the fight because Big Tobacco will not back down.

“Our health district has a high cancer rate as well as the highest rate of smokeless tobacco users in the state,” explains Diana Garcia, Program Manager at SWNPHD. “Tobacco is still the number one cause of preventable cancer in the US. Avoiding tobacco will lower the cancer rates and protect our youth from the dangers of tobacco.”

On April 1, 2024, the Take Down Tobacco National Day of Action, SWNPHD encourages youth activists, educators, parents, health advocates and concerned citizens to come together and share their commitment to:

- Raise awareness of the problem of tobacco use in their community.
- Encourage youth to reject the tobacco industry's deceptive marketing and stay tobacco-free.
- Urge elected officials to take action to protect kids from tobacco.

SWNPHD and Tobacco Free Nebraska are working to help people quit tobacco, eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke, and protect youth by keeping them from using tobacco. Learn more and get involved at <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Tobacco-Free-Nebraska.aspx>. For help quitting, the Nebraska Tobacco Quitline is available at [Quitnow.ne.gov](http://Quitnow.ne.gov), 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669), and in Spanish at 1-855-DÉJELO-YA (1-855-335-3569). Youth cessation services offered by Tobacco Free Nebraska can be accessed by testing “START MY QUIT” to 36072 or by visiting [ne.mylifemyquit.com](http://ne.mylifemyquit.com).

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. You can follow us on Facebook, YouTube, TikTok and Instagram or view the website at [www.swhealth.ne.gov](http://www.swhealth.ne.gov) which contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health. Call (308) 345-4223; one number three locations, McCook, Imperial, and Ogallala.

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