

Objective 3: Broaden the Public Health Framework for Tobacco to Address the Intersection of Tobacco, Cannabis, and Other Emerging Products

The tobacco industry is constantly inventing and reinventing products and the tobacco control landscape is changing fast. E-cigarettes like JUUL and Puff Bar continue to entice new users, while emerging products like heated tobacco products and products that use synthetic or other non-tobacco derived nicotine present new challenges.¹⁶ Legalized cannabis threatens to renormalize smoking as the cannabis industry and supporters advocate to allow cannabis smoking in places where smoking of any product is currently not permitted.¹⁷ Similarly, the rapidly growing cannabis industry has adopted tactics used by the tobacco industry, including predatory marketing to marginalized communities.¹⁸ The situation demands a strong public health response that takes on the combined threat of tobacco, cannabis, and emerging products that threaten public health gains made against smoking and vaping.

Key Concepts

- The tobacco industry continues to introduce new products, such as synthetic nicotine products, in an attempt to evade existing tobacco laws.
- As cannabis use becomes more acceptable and its use is permitted in more public places, it threatens to renormalize smoking and roll back existing tobacco laws.
- The tobacco industry is promoting a harm reduction strategy whereby they promote emerging tobacco products as “less harmful” in hopes that these products will be exempted from any existing or future laws restricting sales or use of tobacco products.¹⁹



Key Themes

- Emphasize the intersection between tobacco, cannabis, and emerging products that threaten to roll back existing smokefree laws.
- Counter tobacco industry efforts to introduce new products that may not be covered by existing tobacco or cannabis laws.
- Fight normalization of cannabis and emerging tobacco product use.

Strategies

Policy

- Ensure that tobacco control policies are comprehensive and do not include exemptions for certain types of tobacco products (including Modified Risk Tobacco Products, heated tobacco products, or products authorized for sale through the Premarket Tobacco Product Application).
- Restrict vaping and cannabis use wherever tobacco use is prohibited, including in multi-unit housing, indoor and outdoor workplaces, parks, and other public places.
- Create a public health, research funding, and education oversight committee for cannabis tax revenue oversight.
- Guarantee that enforcement language in cannabis regulations does not penalize individuals for the purchase, use, possession, or sale of cannabis.
- Modify successful tobacco policies to apply to cannabis regulation.
- Ensure that restrictions on cannabis advertising are consistent with tobacco and applied equally across all communities.

Education

- Counter the impact of predatory marketing on youth through school-based tobacco education and media literacy programs.
- Use evidence-based tobacco control strategies to reduce the demand for cannabis among youth and protect non-users from secondhand smoke exposure.
- Include cannabis in school-based tobacco prevention programs and public education campaigns.
- Increase public understanding of the interconnectedness of tobacco and cannabis products and the need for comprehensive youth and young adult prevention strategies.



Research

- Support research into the health effects of using tobacco and cannabis together and track patterns of use among different demographic populations.
- Analyze new products, including those that combine tobacco and cannabis, and how devices, delivery methods, flavors, and other features affect uptake and use.
- Document the increasing potency of tobacco and cannabis products and find out how high levels of nicotine and tetrahydrocannabinol (THC; the active ingredient in cannabis) affects use and dependence.
- Continue to track cannabis use and exposure to cannabis secondhand smoke in surveillance and evaluation activities, paying particular attention to youth, young adults, and priority populations.
- Conduct research assessing how people with behavioral health conditions may use cannabis or tobacco to self-medicate and how that can deter them from seeking professional help.

Action

- Expose and oppose the increasing alliance between the tobacco and cannabis industries.
- Improve public health protections and school-based prevention programs for cannabis to include a stronger public health oversight of cannabis.

Partnerships

- Partner with groups to counter predatory cannabis marketing that targets priority populations.
- Work with regulatory agencies to restrict cannabis sales in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color by limiting retailer density and controlling pricing.
- Collaborate with substance abuse prevention groups to support restrictions on cannabis advertising to the extent possible, ensuring that the restrictions are consistent with tobacco advertising and marketing restrictions and applied equitably across all communities.
- Work with cannabis prevention and regulatory partners to apply lessons learned from tobacco control to reduce the normalization of smoking and negative impacts of cannabis marketing, sales, and use on youth and priority populations.

Funding

- Support the use of more Prop 64 (the Control, Regulate, and Tax Adult Use of Marijuana Act of 2016) funding for research on public health, mental health, and school success needs related to cannabis.
- Direct cannabis tax revenues to cannabis public health approaches and youth prevention programs aligned with tobacco prevention programs.