



OVX/VKAT Newsletter

October 2023

802 Youth Leadership Summit November 9 | 8AM -3PM Vermont State University's Randolph campus

Join us as we collaborate to amplify authentic youth voice and engagement on critical issues relevant to Vermont's health & well-being.

This summit will feature learning and action opportunities for students & educators/advisors about the harm caused by commercial tobacco and how we can expose the industry. Tracks are designed for OVX & VKAT chapters and interested youth in grades 5-12 around:

- Creative Communications
- Environmental & Social Justice
- Leadership & Policy Development

Registration details and a full schedule will soon be posted on the [VCPI](#) OVX/VKAT page and e-mailed to all OVX/VKAT advisors.

If you are not an advisor but would like to receive e-mail communication about this event, please contact [Alex](#) or [Liza](#).

Outline of the day's events

8:15-9:00: Arrival - Welcome & Registration
9:00-10:15: Keynote Presentation
10:30-Noon: Workshop (Session A)
12:15-1:00: Lunch
1:15-2:45pm: Workshop (Session B)
2:45pm: Departure

This special event is hosted by VDH Tobacco Control Program & Vermont Collaborative for Practice Improvement & Innovation.



Student Media Passes Now Available – 802 Youth Leadership Summit

Vermont student journalists are invited to attend on the 802 Youth Leadership Summit on November 9th, at Vermont State University-Randolph. The day-long conference will focus on the harms caused by commercial nicotine use and the industry's web of misinformation. It will feature presentations and workshops from Vermont students, public health/mental health professionals, educators, and other special guests – focused on responses grounded in authentic youth voice, creative communications, policy development, and environmental & social justice.

Student journalists will also have the opportunity to interview conference organizers prior to the summit.

To obtain a Student Media pass, please email: alex.lehning@vermontstate.edu

Co-hosted by Our Voices Xposed/Vermont Kids Against Tobacco via the VDH Tobacco Control Program and the Vermont Cooperative for Practice Improvement & Innovation.

We are looking for youth interested in helping welcome and guide their peers throughout the day and serving as event MC's during the 802 Youth Leadership Summit

Please contact either [Alex](#) or [Liza](#) if you have youth interested in assisting or providing input on the day's activities.

Program Updates

We recognize youth engagement and advocacy has changed since Vermont Kids Against Tobacco (VKAT) was formed in 1995 and Our Voices Exposed (OVX) in 2001. Today's youth lead busy lives – at home, working/volunteering, and in school. We also know they care about many things: mental health, social justice, health & well-being, and the environment.

Commercial tobacco and nicotine use are intertwined with all the issues that youth are already passionate about and speaking out on. This year, our goal is to amplify their voices by exploring the root causes of product misuse and the tobacco industry's web of influence and misinformation.



Professional Data Analysts (PDA) is currently conducting an evaluation of the OVX and VKAT programs and will have recommendations available for the VDH Tobacco Control Program and the Agency of Education mid to late fall. This evaluation will help guide our strategic planning for an updated or new program model, which will be in place for the 2024-2025 school year. In the meantime, we are implementing small changes and trying out new approaches for the coming year. One of these changes is aligning with the Agency of Education (AOE) and using the term “Chapters” instead of groups when referring to OVX/VKAT sites. We also have a new facilitation partner, the Vermont Cooperative for Practice Improvement & Innovation (VCPI). This mental health nonprofit hosted by Vermont State University, and their staff will be supporting our programs and activities.

Welcome to the OVX/VKAT Network!

We would like to welcome **Hartford Middle School** SAP Janet Potter and her group of 6 middle school youth to the OVX/VKAT Network as well as Brian Duda from Healthy Lamoille Valley and his group of youth from **Lamoille Middle School**!

Want to learn more about starting an OVX/VKAT Chapter or integrating one into an existing youth group?

Check out our Information sheet at the end of this month's newsletter to learn more! You may also reach out to [Liza Comiskey](#) with any questions or if you are ready to join us, fill out our [Chapter Registration](#) form to get started.

Upcoming Events, Webinars and Trainings of Interest

Teen Misconceptions About E-Cigs, Nicotine, and Flavored Vapes: What Should Parents Know?

September 26 | 8:30 - 9:30pm EDT

Cost: Free

Description: Disposable and fruit and candy flavored vapes can't be sold legally in the U.S., yet they're still readily available. Why? The answer is complex and has concerned parents wringing their hands. In this webinar, [Bonnie Halpern-Felsher, PhD](#), developmental psychologist, will address common teen misconceptions about nicotine and vaping. Her research focuses on understanding and reducing adolescent tobacco use, alcohol and marijuana use, and risky behavior.

Parents/caregivers, students, educators, mental health professionals, and community members welcome! **Click here to [register](#)**. NOTE: Zoom webinar link is included in your Order Notification under "Additional Information"



Vibrant Queer Joy in School Communities: Building Belonging

The first session is being held October 12 | 3:00PM to 5:30PM

Cost: \$100/Webinar or \$360/Full Series

Professional Learning Hours: 2.5/Webinar

Description: With Outright Vermont, The Vermont Higher Education Collaborative is offering four different webinars that offer training and resources for supporting LGBTQIA+ students. The webinars are open to anyone who works with youth. Folks can register for any or all webinars. [Click here](#) for more information or to register.

Rutland Regional Youth Power Day

October 14 | 10:00AM – 5:00PM

Lunch Provided | \$50 stipend for participation

Register by September 29th at outrightvt.org

Description: Outright Vermont invites youth to collaborate as changemakers and movement organizers in our first Regional Youth Power Day. Regional Youth Power Days are a tool for LGBTQ+ and allied youth located near each other to develop their community organizing skills and experience the power of queer joy! The first Regional Youth Power Day will be held at an accessible location in Rutland, VT on October 14th. All LGBTQ+ and allied youth 13-19 in and around Rutland County are invited to join for food, connection, and organizing for change!

Youth Thrive

October 17 & 24 * | 10:00AM – 4:00PM

**Must attend both days*

Location: TBD

Cost: Free

Description: Youth Thrive is an evidence-informed framework for approaching our work with youth ages 9-24. Instead of a sole focus on limiting risk factors or maintaining a problem-free environment, Youth Thrive teaches youth work professionals and parents to recognize, support, and build on protective and promotive factors. Based in strengths-based and positive psychology, this approach can be used in any setting where youth and their families are served.

Contact [Becky](#) @ Vermont Afterschool to register.

CREATING A CULTURE OF YOUTH VOICE

October 19 | 3:00 PM–5:00 PM

Cost: Free

Description: Youth voice is increasingly becoming a buzzword, but what does it really mean? This workshop will help you build your understanding of what youth voice is and can be. It will also show you how you can infuse it into every aspect of your program and every level of your organization. Participants will leave with a better understanding of what programming that encourages youth voice looks like and how they can best promote it every day.

Contact [Becky](#) @ Vermont Afterschool to register.



PAVe's Clear the Vapor Conference

October 24

Cost: Free

Description: Clear the Vapor is PAVE's annual high-level and highly accessible youth vaping event. Clear the Vapor is a unique, parent-powered, and volunteer-led FREE event intended to provide both an overview and a deep dive into all aspects of this ongoing adolescent public health crisis, with an emphasis on practical solutions. Always VIRTUAL, Always FREE!

[Sign up here](#) to be notified when registration begins for this year's conference.

Youth Mental Health First Aid

October 24 | 9:00AM - 3:00PM

Cost: \$30

Youth Mental Health First Aid USA teaches you how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders in youth. This training gives adults who work with youth the skills they need to reach out and provide initial support to children and adolescents (ages 12-18) who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem and help connect them to the appropriate care. This training includes 2 hours of required pre-work and 5 hours of instructor-led content.

Contact [Becky](#) @ Vermont Afterschool to register.

OVX Youth – We want to hear from you! Be part of the program evaluation process and receive compensation for your time!

This is an exciting opportunity for Vermont youth who participate in OVX activities to have their voices heard! All youth who participate will be compensated for their time. Please find the informational document and permission slip at the end of this newsletter

OVX/VKAT Upcoming Days of Awareness

Health Literacy Month (October 1-31) - Efforts are needed to ensure that smokers with lower health literacy are provided with understandable and impactful information about the health consequences of smoking and benefits of quitting. Resources and activities for those interested in holding an event can be found on the [OVX/VKAT Team Basecamp](#)* or on the following websites: [CDC](#), [National Health Institute](#).

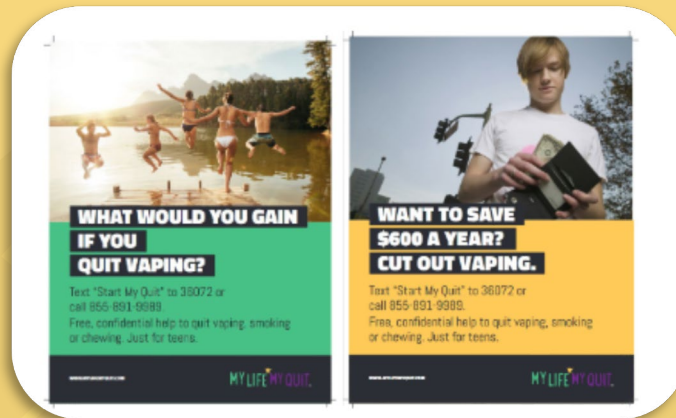
World Mental Health Day (October 10) - Nicotine can worsen anxiety symptoms and amplify feelings of depression. Resources and activities for those interested in holding



an event can be found on the [OVX/VKAT Team Basecamp](#)* or on the [World Health Organization's](#) website.

**To gain access to the OVX/VKAT Team Basecamp, please connect with [Liza Comiskey](#). This site is specifically for OVX/VKAT Chapters and those working to directly support their efforts.*

Educational Resources



My Life, My Quit Material

Ordering My Life, My Quit posters, magnets, wallet cards and fidget tools (PopSockets and push pop stress reliever wrist strap keychains) just got easier! Simply email us your request along with a mailing address to tobaccovt@vermont.gov and we will take care of the rest. As always, My Life. My Quit materials are provided free of charge.

Vaping Prevention and Education Resource Center

The [Vaping Prevention and Education Resource Center](#) provides free science-based, standards-mapped materials that teachers can use to help their students understand the dangers associated with vaping and nicotine addiction. The Center for Tobacco Products also developed free materials for parents and teens.

- **Teachers will find** lesson plans, interactive tools, infographics, and videos with tobacco facts and tips about how to teach teens about the dangers of vaping.
- **Parents will find** fact sheets, videos, and resources to help them understand and recognize vapes, talk with their children, and keep the conversation going over time.
- **Students will find** real-life stories and relatable content to help them understand vaping, nicotine addiction, common myths about vapes, and how to say no to vaping.



The launch of the resource center illustrates FDA's continued commitment to youth vaping prevention. The CTP will be continuously updating the resource center with new materials, so check back often for the latest resources.

Check out the American Heart Association's [Vermont Youth Advocacy Page](#)

Our tobacco prevention partners at the American Heart Association created a [fun advocacy training](#) focusing specifically on tobacco just for Vermont youth. Please share it with your students and other youth interested in getting involved in advocacy.

The [Vermont Youth Advocacy Page](#) website provides resources that will make advocating for tobacco prevention easy and fun! You'll find videos providing facts about tobacco's impact in Vermont, the Vermont legislative process, and how easy it is to contact state lawmakers on issues you care about, like tobacco.



The American Heart Association has also created this resource which they hope you'll share with youth, parents, teachers, and community partners to help them in their effort to ban flavored tobacco products.

Please feel free to share this out in your newsletters and hang the poster up at your school, and in your community or workplace so people can easily scan the QR code and take action to urge VT lawmakers to pass a tobacco flavor ban!

Please reach out to Tina Zuk at tina.zuk@heart.org with any questions.



Did you know....



This factsheet sheet can be used to educate your community about the harms of using tobacco/nicotine. Visit the Stanford [Tobacco Prevention Toolkit](#) for more information.

CDC's Office on Smoking and Health Launches *Empower Vape-Free Youth*

The CDC's Office on Smoking and Health launched a new campaign, [Empower Vape-Free Youth™](#). This campaign builds on the Emerging Tobacco Products and the Protecting Young People from E-cigarettes communication initiatives. The goal of the [Empower Vape-Free Youth™](#) campaign is to empower educators to speak with youth about the risks of e-cigarettes and nicotine addiction and to encourage youth to avoid and/or quit vaping. Educators include teachers, coaches, school counselors, and on-site administrators (e.g., principals, vice-principals, etc.) in U.S. middle and high schools.

The new campaign materials include print resources, animated videos, live action videos, and social media assets.

News of Interest

Last month the Vermont Department of Health released a [Vaping Prevention Policies in Schools Fact Sheet](#). This was created to encourage schools to adopt evidence-based prevention measures to address the youth vaping epidemic. This document complements the Department of Health's [Addressing Vaping in Vermont Schools Toolkit*](#), which provides more detailed information on the resources available for schools, parents/guardians, youth and community partners.

In a recent article titled *How to Spend Juul Settlement Funds: Champion Our Children, Target Commercial Tobacco*, the [Public Health Law Center](#) stated that combatting the youth vaping epidemic "requires a multifaceted approach that combines education, prevention, and treatment. Allocating Juul litigation settlement and other funds strategically is one way to address the problem." Some of the suggestions provided for the strategic use of funds were:



- Education and prevention programs
- Treatment and cessation programs
- Supportive school disciplinary practices
- Youth engagement programs
- Parent and community outreach

They go on to state that implementing vape detectors and promoting a surveillance culture in schools may not be the most effective or beneficial approach to creating healthy change. The American Lung Association and the CDC are also in agreement. They believe that punitive measures, such as suspension for violations and vape detector placement, are not proven effective and do not support youth in ending their tobacco experimentation or dependency.

As you begin to navigate another school year, please remember that your [Local Offices of Health](#), [Community Tobacco Control Coalitions](#) and the [Tobacco Control Program](#) are here to assist. Together we can make a positive difference in the health and wellness of our youth and school community.

**This toolkit will be updated late fall to early winter, as we are awaiting the 2023 YRBS data.*





OVX/VKAT Newsletter Attachments





OVX/VKAT Chapter Information

August 2023

The Our Voices Xposed (OVX) and Vermont Kids Against Tobacco (VKAT) program was created over 20 years ago and a lot has changed since then. What is being done to help keep today's youth engaged in efforts to reduce and prevent use of commercial nicotine products?

We recognize youth engagement and advocacy has changed since Vermont Kids Against Tobacco (VKAT) was formed in 1995 and Our Voices Exposed (OVX) in 2001. Today's youth lead busy lives – at home, working/volunteering, and in school. We also know they care about many things: mental health, social justice, health & well-being, and the environment.

Commercial tobacco and nicotine use are intertwined with all the issues that youth are already passionate about and speaking out on. This year, our goal is to amplify their voices by exploring the root causes of product misuse and the tobacco industry's web of influence and misinformation.

Professional Data Analysts (PDA) is currently conducting an evaluation of the OVX and VKAT programs and will have recommendations available for the VDH Tobacco Control Program and the Agency of Education mid to late fall. This evaluation will help guide our strategic planning for an updated or new program model, which will be in place for the 2024-2025 school year. In the meantime, we are implementing small changes and trying out new approaches for the coming year. One of these changes is aligning with the Agency of Education (AOE) and using the term "Chapters" instead of groups when referring to OVX/VKAT sites. We also have a new facilitation partner, the Vermont Cooperative for Practice Improvement & Innovation (VCPI). This mental health nonprofit hosted by Vermont State University, and their staff will be supporting our programs and activities.

Does OVX/VKAT need to be a standalone program?

It can but - doesn't need to be. You can be a standalone Chapter or integrate VKAT/OVX issues and activities into another youth or community group/club/organization. We encourage you to be creative,



OVX/VKAT Chapter Information

August 2023

innovative and do what works best for your school and community. If integrating the activities provided for OVX and VKAT by the Vermont Tobacco Control Program into an existing youth/student organization, club or program works best, please do that. You may also partner with other schools or community partners in your region. Co-branding is also an option.

Do we have to use the OVX/VKAT brand to identify our chapter?

You are not required to use the OVX and VKAT name to identify your group. Please reference/credit the Vermont Tobacco Control Program and/or its OVX and VKAT programs when using our materials with other groups. The objective is to increase awareness and understanding of how influential and damaging the tobacco industry is to youth and to the communities they live, work, study, and play in.

What is being done to bring authentic youth voice to OVX/VKAT Program planning?

This year we are looking for interested youth to join the OVX/VKAT Youth Planning Council. Youth on this council will assist and guide the Vermont Tobacco Control Program and VCPI with event planning and programming ideas. This is a unique opportunity to develop leadership skills and gain valuable policy & planning experience while helping to ensure youth voices are leading the way.

The Youth Planning Council will meet virtually. Youth who are interested in joining are asked to connect with VCPI's Alex Lehning at Alex.Lehning@VermontState.edu for more information.

How many youth do we need to recruit for OVX/VKAT?

In the past, there has been a required minimum number of youth needed for the chapter to be successful. This requirement has since been removed. We encourage advisors to share information on the work this chapter is doing around membership and retention throughout the year.



OVX/VKAT Chapter Information

August 2023

OVX/VKAT chapters will be provided with information that can be used to create informational recruitment packets for youth and their families. Included in this packet will be an event photo release form. These resources will also be available on [Basecamp](#).

What are the expectations and requirements of OVX/VKAT Chapters?

Regardless of the source funding, each registered OVX/VKAT chapter is required to adhere to the same VDH/AOE guidelines and deliverables. We recognize occasional scheduling conflicts may occur, but ask for the following commitments:

1. Attending and participating in Advisor Networking sessions.
2. Attending the 802 Youth Leadership Summit (fall) and State House Rally (spring) with OVX/VKAT Youth.
3. Holding regular meetings with youth and informing/educating on Tobacco's Web of Influence.
4. Completing a Youth Voices Project.
 - ❖ The only guidelines provided for this project are that it weaves in Tobacco's Web of Influence, is youth driven and is completed by the end of the school year. Youth have the freedom to determine what this project look like.
5. Host 2 "Day of Awareness" events within the school or community and highlight Tobacco's Web of Influence on that issue.
6. A calendar of suggested Days of Awareness, with resources, will be provided to all registered OVX/VKAT Chapters.
7. Timely response to any emails and communications relating to your chapter's work.
8. Quarterly reporting of chapter activities, attendance, successes and challenges
 - ❖ This will be done via a simple and quick online form.

In addition, it is important that advisors utilize the [OVX/VKAT Advisor Basecamp](#) platform to access trusted resources and materials provided for OVX/VKAT Chapters. Individual account holders can easily change their notification settings so that Basecamp communications are not sent via e-mail. Instructions for this simple fix can be found [here](#).



OVX/VKAT Chapter Information

August 2023

How will Chapter reporting or important information, such as youth photo release forms, be collected?

This year we are asking advisors to collect these at the beginning of the year or when youth join. These will need to be scanned and sent in by the advisor to both Liza Comiskey at

Liza.comiskey@vermont.gov and Alex Lehning at Alex.Lehning@VermontState.edu.

When submitting, please make sure the name of the youth is legible and the chapter/school is listed on the document. It is also important that the names youth who do not consent to being photographed be shared as well. These documents will be kept on file.

There will also be a quick and simple online chapter activity reporting form due by November 30th, February 28th and May 31st. This document will help us collect important information and track activities happening around the state.

How will OVX/VKAT Chapter and youth be acknowledged for the work being done in their schools and communities?

We would like to highlight the work being done through OVX/VKAT Chapters on both the state and local level. Yet in order to do this, it is important that stories and photographs from chapter activities and events your youth are involved be shared with us. Please email information to both Liza Comiskey at Liza.comiskey@vermont.gov and Alex Lehning at Alex.Lehning@VermontState.edu. Please also feel free to share these on Basecamp.

If Chapters or Advisors have questions about OVX/VKAT, who do they contact?

Liza Comiskey, Vermont Tobacco Control's Youth & Young Adult Program Coordinator and **Alex Lehning**, Executive Director at Vermont Cooperative for Practice Improvement & Innovation are your OVX/VKAT Contacts. Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions or concerns.



OVX/VKAT Chapter Information

August 2023

Liza can be reached at: Liza.comiskey@vermont.gov and Alex can be reached at: Alex.Lehning@VermontState.edu.

What experiences do youth gain from participating in OVX/VKAT activities?

Education and Peer Support:

- ❖ Promoting science and data over misinformation
- ❖ Exploring and impacting public health policymaking
- ❖ The ability to identify the tobacco and vaping industries' deceptive marketing tactics and their web of influence, including in Vermont
- ❖ Learning and sharing about the root causes of tobacco and nicotine use

Leadership Development & Youth Empowerment:

- ❖ Participation in advocacy and leadership skill-building workshops
- ❖ Discovering the power of their own authentic voice
- ❖ Networking and engaging with other youth at statewide events
- ❖ Creating positive change in their school and community

What resources & supports will be provided to OVX/VKAT Chapters?

1. Monthly newsletters with information on upcoming events, webinars and youth focused trainings of interest, spotlights on the latest products and trends and stories from youth involved in OVX/VKAT chapters.
2. Access to trainings, activities and resources that can easily be incorporated into a new or existing youth/student organization or program.
3. Networking calls to connect with other advisors around the state.
4. A mentoring program for new advisors.
5. Access to the OVX/VKAT Advisor Basecamp for discussion and resource-sharing.
6. Up to date and accurate information pertaining to tobacco and nicotine products, trends and



OVX/VKAT Chapter Information

August 2023

policies from the Vermont Department of Health's Tobacco Control Program and our partners.

- Assistance and support with learning the historical and current practices of the tobacco industry practices that impact youth.
- Bridging communication and creating connections with community coalitions and local offices of health.

What kinds of activities will take place this school year?

- ❖ Youth Leadership Summit
- ❖ Virtual advocacy and leadership skill-building workshops for youth
- ❖ Youth State House Rally: A Call to Action on Tobacco
- ❖ School and community Days of Awareness (*Resources & activities are provided on Basecamp*)
 - ❖ Participating in awareness days and observances, such as Suicide Prevention Week, Health Literacy Month, World Mental Health Day, Solidarity Week, World Day of Social Justice, Take Down Tobacco Day, Day of Silence, Earth Day National Public Health Week, World No Tobacco Day.
 - ❖ This is an opportunity for youth to educate others and share resources on issues that they care about.
 - ❖ It is also a chance for advisors and youth to dive into provided materials and discover how issues they care about are impacted and influenced by tobacco and vape companies web of influence.



2023-2024 OVX/VKAT Activity Calendar

Theme: Tobacco's Web of Influence



Date/ Time/ Location	Activity	Information
September 10-16, 2023	Suicide Prevention Week	Smoking and vaping can detrimentally impact mental health. Resources and activities for those interested in holding an event can be found on Basecamp .
September 12, 2023 3:00pm - 4:00pm Microsoft Teams	Informational Session & Networking Call	Please e-mail Liza Comiskey at liza.comiskey@vermont.gov or Alex Lehning at Alex.Lehning@VermontState.edu to receive the meeting link if you did not receive one.
September 18, 2023	802 Youth Leadership Summit Registration Opens	Registration information will be shared out with OVX/VKAT Chapters on this date.
October 1-31, 2023	Health Literacy Month	Efforts are needed to ensure that smokers with lower health literacy are provided with understandable and impactful information about the health consequences of smoking and benefits of quitting. Resources and activities for those interested in holding an event can be found on Basecamp or on the following websites: CDC , National Health Institute
October 10, 2023	World Mental Health Day	Nicotine can worsen anxiety symptoms and amplify feelings of depression. Resources and activities for those interested in holding an event can be found on Basecamp or on the World Health Organization's website.

Advisor Networking Calls	In Person Events	Event Registration Information	Quarterly Chapter Activity Reports Due	Tobacco's Web of Influence School/Community Awareness Opportunities
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2023-2024 OVX/VKAT Activity Calendar

Theme: Tobacco's Web of Influence



Date/ Time/ Location	Activity	Information
October 26, 2023	802 Youth Leadership Summit Registration Closes	
November 9, 2023 8:00am- 3:00pm Vermont State University – Randolph	802 Youth Leadership Summit: Tobacco's Web of Influence	Open to youth in grades 5-12
November 6-11, 2023	Solidarity Week	LGBTQ+ communities and people have been targeted for years by the tobacco industry. Resources and activities for those interested in holding an event can be found on Basecamp or on the GLSEN website.
November 16, 2023	Great American Smoke Out	Tobacco use is the major cause of preventable death. Resources and activities for those interested in holding an event can be found on Basecamp or on the American Cancer Society's website.
November 30, 2023	Quarterly Chapter Activity Report Due	This simple and quick online form will help us collect information and track activities happening around the state.

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2023-2024 OVX/VKAT Activity Calendar

Theme: Tobacco's Web of Influence



Date/ Time/ Location	Activity	Information
January 2, 2024	802 Youth State House Rally Registration Opens	Registration information will be shared out on with OVX/VKAT Chapters on this date.
January 17, 2024 3:00pm - 4:00pm Microsoft Teams	Advisor Networking Call	Please e-mail Liza Comiskey at liza.comiskey@vermont.gov or Alex Lehning at Alex.Lehning@VermontState.edu to receive the meeting link if you did not receive one.
February 2024	Black History Month	The tobacco industry has strategically and aggressively targeted black and brown communities with menthol cigarettes for decades. Resources and activities for those interested in holding an event can be found on Basecamp or on the Truth Initiative website.
February 2, 2024	802 Youth State House Rally Registration Closes	
February 13, 2024 10am State House, Montpelier	802 Youth State House Rally	Snow Date: Thursday, February 15 th

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2023-2024 OVX/VKAT Activity Calendar

Theme: Tobacco's Web of Influence



Date/ Time/ Location	Activity	Information
February 20, 2024	World Day of Social Justice	Worldwide the tobacco industry has unfair and dangerous labor practices. Resources and activities for those interested in holding an event can be found on Basecamp and on the following websites: National LGBTQ Cancer Network , Truth Initiative
February 28, 2024	Quarterly Chapter Activity Report Due	This simple and quick online form will help us collect information and track activities happening around the state.
March 14, 2024 3:00pm – 4:00pm Microsoft Teams	Advisor Networking Call	Please e-mail Liza Comiskey at liza.comiskey@vermont.gov or Alex Lehning at Alex.Lehning@VermontState.edu to receive the meeting link if you did not receive one.
April 1, 2024	Take Down Tobacco National Day of Action	The tobacco industry discounts its products in low-income areas and near schools. Resources and activities for those interested in holding an event can be found on Basecamp or on the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids website.
April 1-7, 2024	National Public Health Week	Public health can and should take on and win over big tobacco. Resources and activities for those interested in holding an event can be found on Basecamp or on the American Public Health Association's website.

Advisor Networking Calls	In Person Events	Event Registration Information	Quarterly Chapter Activity Reports Due	Tobacco's Web of Influence School/Community Awareness Opportunities
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2023-2024 OVX/VKAT Activity Calendar

Theme: Tobacco's Web of Influence



Date/ Time/ Location	Activity	Information
April 12, 2024	Day of Silence	LGBTQ+ communities and people have been targeted for years by the tobacco industry. Resources and activities for those interested in holding an event can be found on Basecamp or on the GLSEN website.
April 22, 2024	Earth Day	Tobacco products are one of the top sources of litter (and chemical exposure) worldwide. Resources and activities for those interested in holding an event can be found on Basecamp or in the California Youth Advocacy Network's Earth Day Toolkit.
May 9, 2024 3:00pm – 4:00pm Microsoft Teams	Advisor Networking Call	Please e-mail Liza Comiskey at liza.comiskey@vermont.gov or Alex Lehning at Alex.Lehning@VermontState.edu to receive the meeting link if you did not receive one.
May 12- 18, 2024	National Prevention Week	Tobacco use is the major cause of preventable death. Resources and activities for those interested in holding an event can be found on Basecamp or on the SAMHSA website.
May 16, 2024	Mental Health Action Day	Smoking and vaping can detrimentally impact mental health. Resources and activities for those interested in holding an event can be found on Basecamp or on the Mental Health Action Network's website.

5

Advisor Networking Calls	In Person Events	Event Registration Information	Quarterly Chapter Activity Reports Due	Tobacco's Web of Influence School/Community Awareness Opportunities
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2023-2024 OVX/VKAT Activity Calendar

Theme: Tobacco's Web of Influence



Date/ Time/ Location	Activity	Information
May 31, 2023	World No Tobacco Day	An international day across the globe speaking up against tobacco. Resources and activities for those interested in holding an event can be found on Basecamp or on the World Health Organization's website
May 31, 2023	Quarterly Chapter Activity Report Due	This simple and quick online form will help us collect information and track activities happening around the state.
June 1- 30, 2024	LGBTQ+ Pride Month	LGBTQ+ communities and people have been targeted for years by the tobacco industry. Resources and activities for those interested in holding an event can be found on Basecamp .

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Invitation to participate in an OVX evaluation!



About the OVX program

The purpose of the Our Voices Exposed (OVX) program that your child is a part of is to educate, inform and empower youth to reduce nicotine and tobacco use among their peers.

We are interested in understanding your child's experience with the OVX program

We will ask questions about:

- Why they joined the program
- The activities they were a part of
- What the group is like
- Impact of the program
- Opinions of program changes

This evaluation will help to adapt programs to meet the needs of Vermont youth about vaping, nicotine and tobacco use.

Your child will receive up to \$15 in gift cards as a thank you for participating.

If you consent, your child will be a part of a discussion board

The facilitated discussion board will be held on an online, secure platform and will take place over 3 days with multiple questions being posted each day.

Youth can post any time on a phone, tablet, or computer.

You will provide an email address where we will send the link to join the group.

There will be two trained moderators to run the discussion boards. All posts will be reviewed by moderators to ensure participant privacy and safety.

About Professional Data Analysts (PDA)

PDA is the external evaluation group that works with the Vermont Department of Health and is leading the OVX evaluation.

Our mission is to create positive social impact by providing tailored data-centric solutions that move public health initiatives forward.

For more information, see www.pdastats.com.

Please sign the form on the next page.

If you have questions, please contact us

Leigh Ann Ganzar, DrPH, MPH
Senior Evaluator at PDA
Principal Investigator
LGanzar@pdastats.com

Consent for Participation in OVX Evaluation

The OVX program is being evaluated by Professional Data Analysts (PDA) to understand the experiences and outcomes of youth in the programs. We invite your child to participate in this evaluation process.

Procedure: If you agree to participate, your child will participate in facilitated, online discussion board, led by trained moderators. They will be asked about their experience in the OVX program and the changes that resulted from being a part of the program. Information will be collected directly from the youth.

Risks and Benefits: There are no known risks for involvement in this evaluation. Participation is voluntary and all participants can refuse to answer questions at any time.

Data collected in this study can help inform the recruitment, delivery, and marketing of youth tobacco engagement programs to Vermonters. Future youth engagement programs may be tailored to meet the needs of Vermont youth in the changing landscape of nicotine and tobacco use. Your child will receive up to \$15 in gift cards (\$5 per day) for participating.

Voluntary participation: Participation is completely voluntary. Your decision about participation will not affect your relationship with the OVX program. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw your permission at any time.

Confidentiality: All information collected will be treated as private. Names and identifying information will not appear on any data collection instruments Data will be stored on a secure server and results **will not identify** your child.

Questions regarding the evaluation should be directed to: Leigh Ann Ganzar (612-623-9110 or lganzar@pdastats.com)

Parent/Guardian Signature

By signing below, I consent to my child's participation in an evaluation of the OVX program.

Parent/guardian email address

Youth email address for discussion board link

Parent/guardian name

Youth name

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Youth school name

Date

Is this your child's first year participating in OVX or are they a returning member?

☐

First year

☐

Returning member



The Vermont Department of Health encourages schools to adopt evidence-based prevention measures to address the youth vaping epidemic. These include delivering education on the health impacts of vaping, increasing perception of harm and strengthening social norms. Punitive measures, such as suspension for violations and vaping detector placement, are not proven effective and do not support youth in ending their tobacco experimentation or dependency. Health Department and CDC funding cannot be used for the purchase of vaping detector devices.

Public Health Strategies for Reducing Vaping or Smoking

- [Addressing Vaping in Vermont Schools: An Educational Toolkit](#)
- [INDEPTH: An Alternative to Suspension or Citation](#)
- [Healthy Futures](#)

Vaping Prevention Resources

- [Vermont Tobacco Control Program](#)
- [CDC](#)
- [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#)

Tobacco Free Campus Policy

- [Vermont School Board Association Tobacco Prohibition Policy for Students and Staff](#)

Youth Engagement Framework

This Positive Youth Development framework provides support to help students become leaders, educators and change makers in their schools and communities:

- [Vermont Kids Against Tobacco \(VKAT\)](#), middle school chapters
- [Our Voices Xposed \(OVX\)](#), high school chapters
- [Getting to Y](#)

Free Voluntary Youth Cessation Programs

- [My Life My Quit](#), offered by the Vermont Department of Health
- [Smokefree Teen](#), provided by the National Cancer Institute
- [Not on Tobacco](#), provided by the American Lung Association
- [NOT for Me](#), provided by the American Lung Association

Key Points

Implement evidence-based prevention curriculums, cessation supports and restorative practice policies as alternatives to suspension programs.

Health Department and CDC funding cannot be used for the purchase of vaping detector devices.

To start a VKAT or OVX chapter in your school, or for more information on vaping prevention, email the Vermont Tobacco Control Program at tobaccovt@vermont.gov.



Clear The Vapor Conference

2023: State of Play

Always Virtual
Always Free

Let's fight
youth tobacco
use, together.

Streaming Online

October 24, 2023

Sign up to be notified when
registration opens for this
FREE event.

SAVE THE DATE

PAVe is thrilled to announce our third annual *Clear the Vapor* conference!

Join us on October 24, 2023 for the return of our high-level and highly accessible youth vaping event. *Clear the Vapor* is a unique, parent-powered and volunteer-led FREE event intended to provide both an overview and a deep dive into all aspects of this ongoing adolescent public health crisis, with an emphasis on practical solutions.

Clear the Vapor 2023 will convene top researchers, public health advocates, educators, and state and national elected officials to participate in exciting discussions, many moderated by PAVE parent volunteers struggling with these issues in real time. Topics include:

- Vaping and mental health
- Federal regulatory updates and action needed
- Alternatives to suspension, restorative justice and best-practice policies for schools
- Parent empowerment models and grassroots advocacy
- Treatment and cessation
- The tobacco industry's exploitive tactics to control local and state policy-making
- JUUL and the current state of national settlements
- Youth prevention & communications efforts
- Menthol and its relationship to the regulation of e-cigarettes
- Tobacco industry divestment and corporate strategies

Clear the Vapor 2022 attracted over 2,000 registrants, an audience of nearly 1,500 live participants, and others who continue to access our valuable content each week free of charge.

In order for us to keep this trailblazing event free and open to all, we appreciate your support, partnership, and collaboration for *Clear the Vapor 2023*. Every dollar donated will help PAVE continue providing critical resources and education to families across the country whose lives have been upended by the youth vaping epidemic.

Together we can fight to protect our kids from the dangers of vaping, flavored tobacco products, and the predatory behavior of Big Tobacco.



OUTRIGHT
VERMONT

RUTLAND REGIONAL

YOUTH POWER DAY



**Register by
Sept. 29!**

**Youth 13-19: Build Community
& Organize for Change!**

October 14, 2023 | 10AM-5PM

Lunch provided | \$50 Stipend for Participation

Accessible space in Downtown Rutland

Register by Sept. 29 at outrightvt.org

TOBACCO COMPANIES ARE TARGETING



**Tobacco companies are targeting Vermont kids.
Act now to tell our state lawmakers
to eliminate flavored tobacco products.**



**SCAN NOW TO
TAKE ACTION!**



**American
Heart
Association.**

**Learn more at
yourethecure.org/flavors**