



Testimony to the Vermont Senate Health And Welfare Committee on S.18

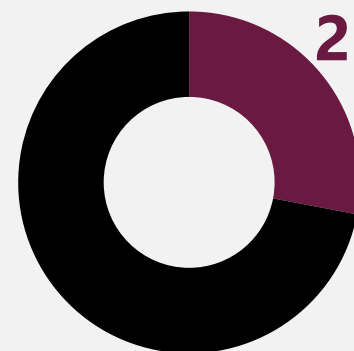
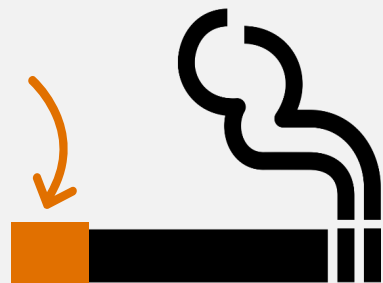
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Commissioner
Vermont Department of Health
2/23/2023**

Tobacco Use Results in High Costs to Vermonters and Over 1,000 Deaths per Year.

Tobacco use is the #1 preventable cause of death in Vermont. Over 1,000/year.

18% of all VT deaths

among adults over 35 are attributable to cigarette smoking.



28%

More than **a quarter of cancer deaths** can be attributed to cigarette smoking in Vermont

Tobacco use is expensive for all Vermonters, even those who don't smoke.

Smoking directly causes **\$404 million** annual health care costs in Vermont, with **\$93.7 million cost to VT Medicaid.**



Smoking costs Vermonters **\$1,037 per household** in state & federal tax burden from smoking-caused government expenditures



\$326 million in cigarette smoking-attributable morbidity-related productivity losses in Vermont

Approximately 105,800 Vermonters Currently Use Tobacco.



1 in 6 adults (16% ≈ 73,300 Vermonters) smoke cigarettes.* U.S. Rate, 14%
1 in 20 adults (5% ≈ 24,900 Vermonters) use e-cigarettes.* U.S. Rate, 7%



1 in 14 high school students (7% ≈ 1,700) smoke cigarettes. U.S. Rate, 6%
1 in 4 high school students (26% ≈ 5,900) use e-cigarettes. U.S. Rate, 33%**

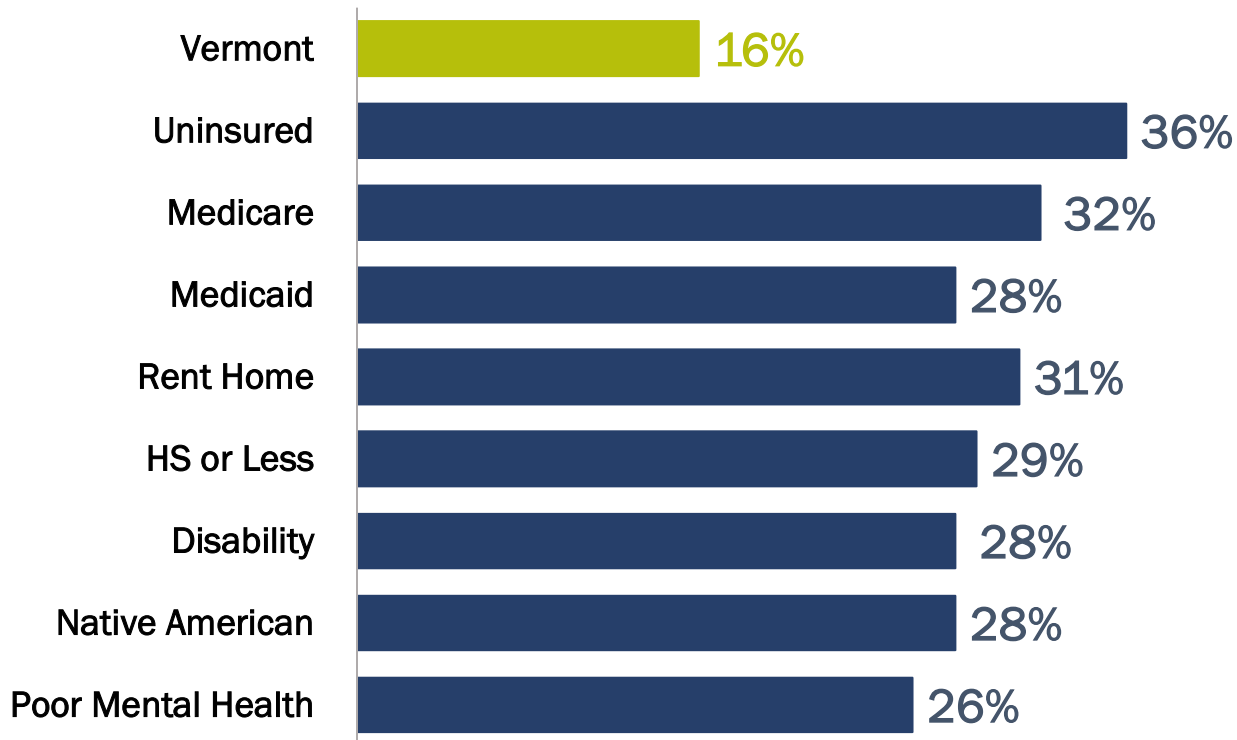
Source: VT Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) 2021 & Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) 2019.

* Adult smoking prevalence is age adjusted to the U.S. 2000 population.

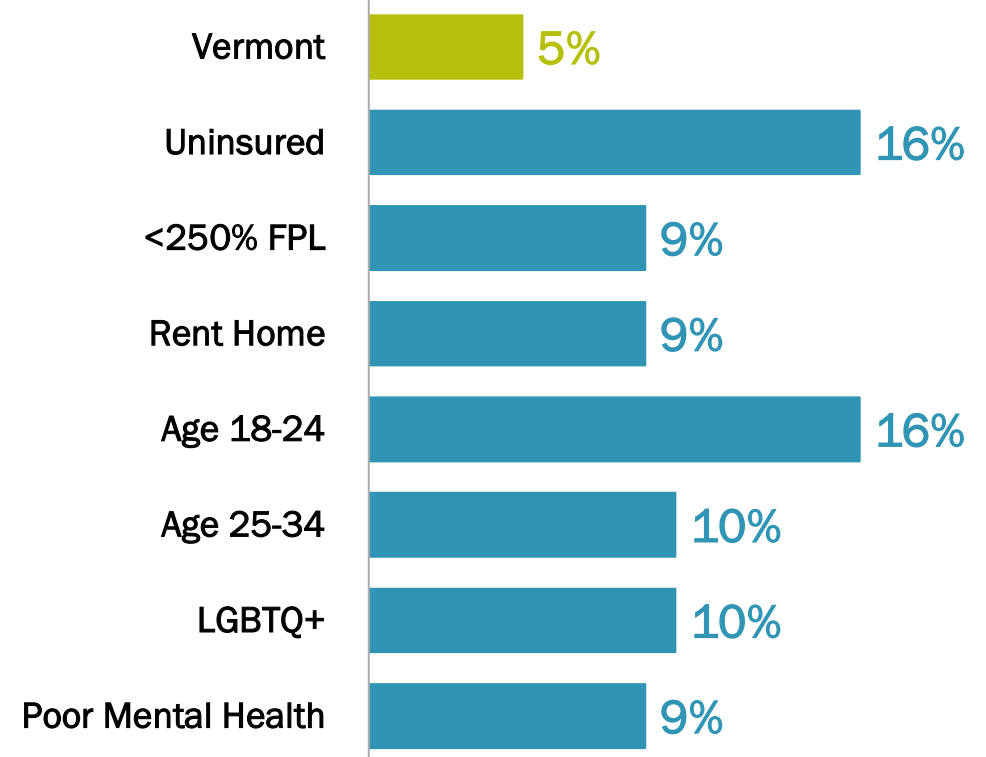
** E-cigarette use among high school students includes: Electronic vapor products (EVP) such as e-cigarettes, vapes, vape pens, e-cigars, e-hookahs, hookah pens, and mods.

Inequities Result in Some Groups of Vermonters Smoking and Using E-Cigarettes at Higher Rates.

Current Smoking Prevalence (%)



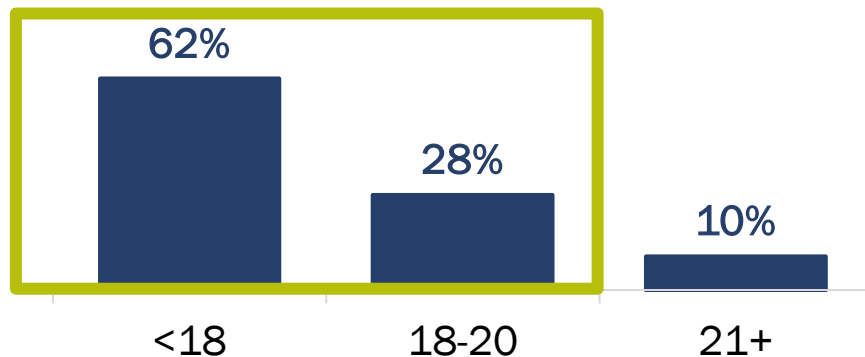
Current E-Cigarette Use Prevalence (%)



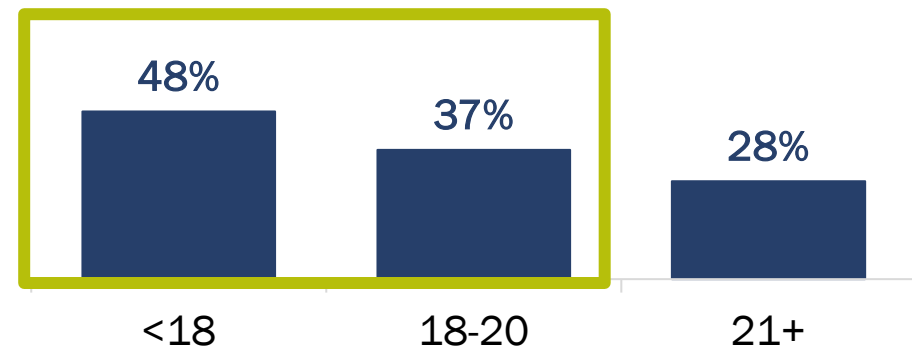
Data Notes: HS=High School; Native American combines 2020 and 2021 data; FPL=Federal Poverty Line; Poor Mental Health=14+ days with poor mental health in past 30; Rent Home includes those with other accommodations. **Data Source:** VT BRFSS 2021; Percentages for smoking are age-adjusted to U.S. 2000 population.

Most Vermonters Who Smoke Began Before Age 21 and Smoke More Heavily.

Age of Smoking Initiation among Vermonters

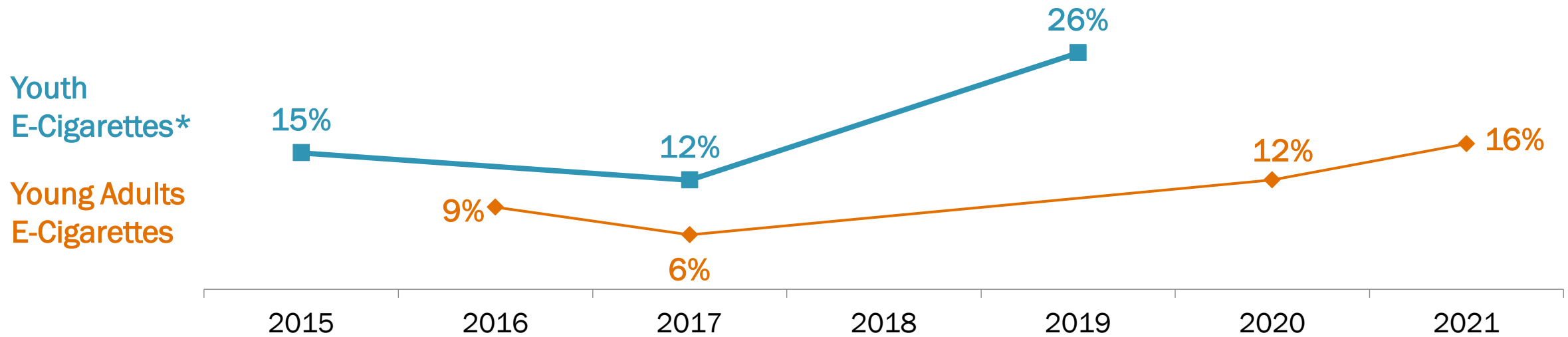


Percentage who Smoked At Least a Pack of Cigarettes a Day by Age of Smoking Initiation



Youth E-Cigarette Use Doubled; Young Adult E-Cigarette Use Nearly Tripled.

Current E-Cigarette Use among VT Youth and Young Adults



Data Sources:

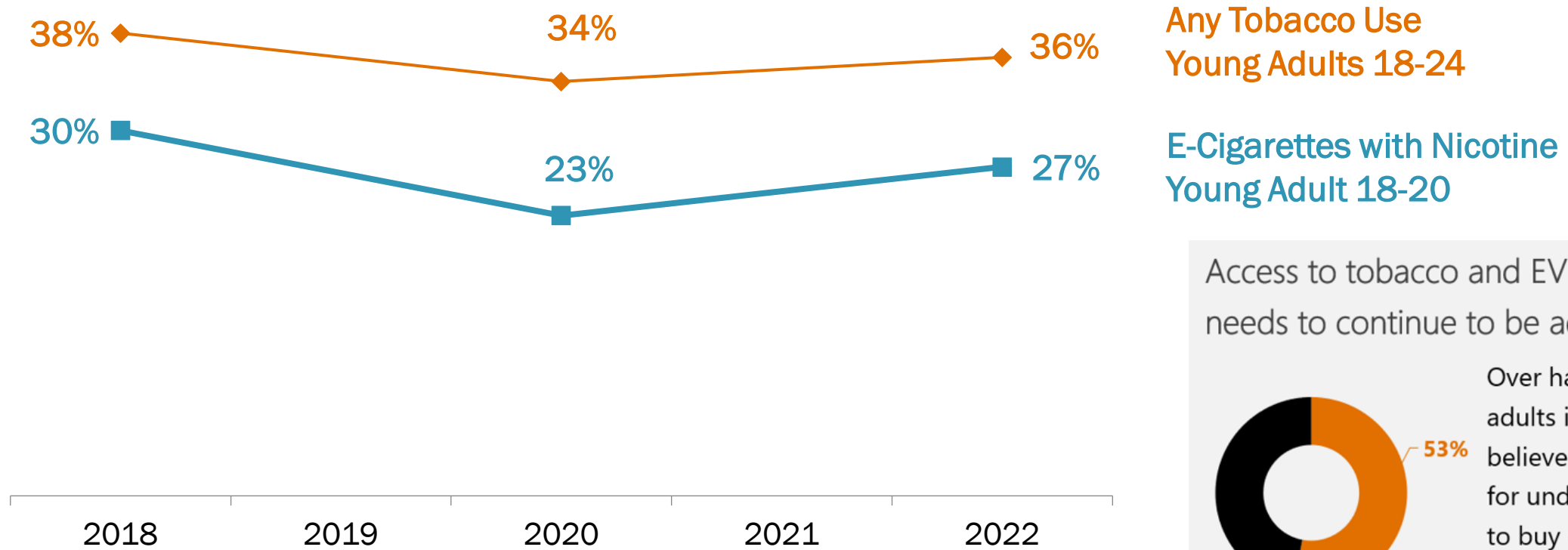
Youth: VT High School YRBS 2015-2019.

Young Adults: VT BRFSS 2016-2021.

*E-cigarette use is defined as electronic vapor products (EVP) such as e-cigarettes, vapes, vape pens, e-cigars, e-hookahs, hookah pens, and mods use among high school students.

Tobacco Use Among Young Adults Has Returned to Pre-Pandemic Rates. Young Adults Continue to Access and Use Tobacco in Spite of T21.

Current Tobacco Use among VT Young Adults

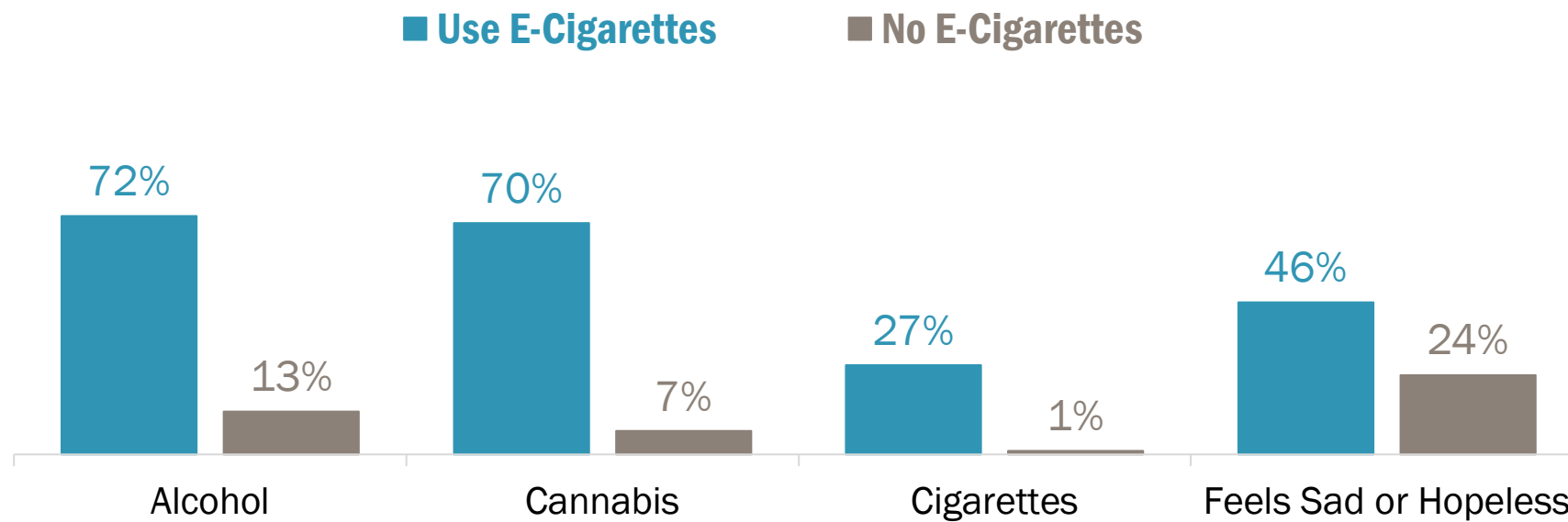


Access to tobacco and EVP products needs to continue to be addressed.

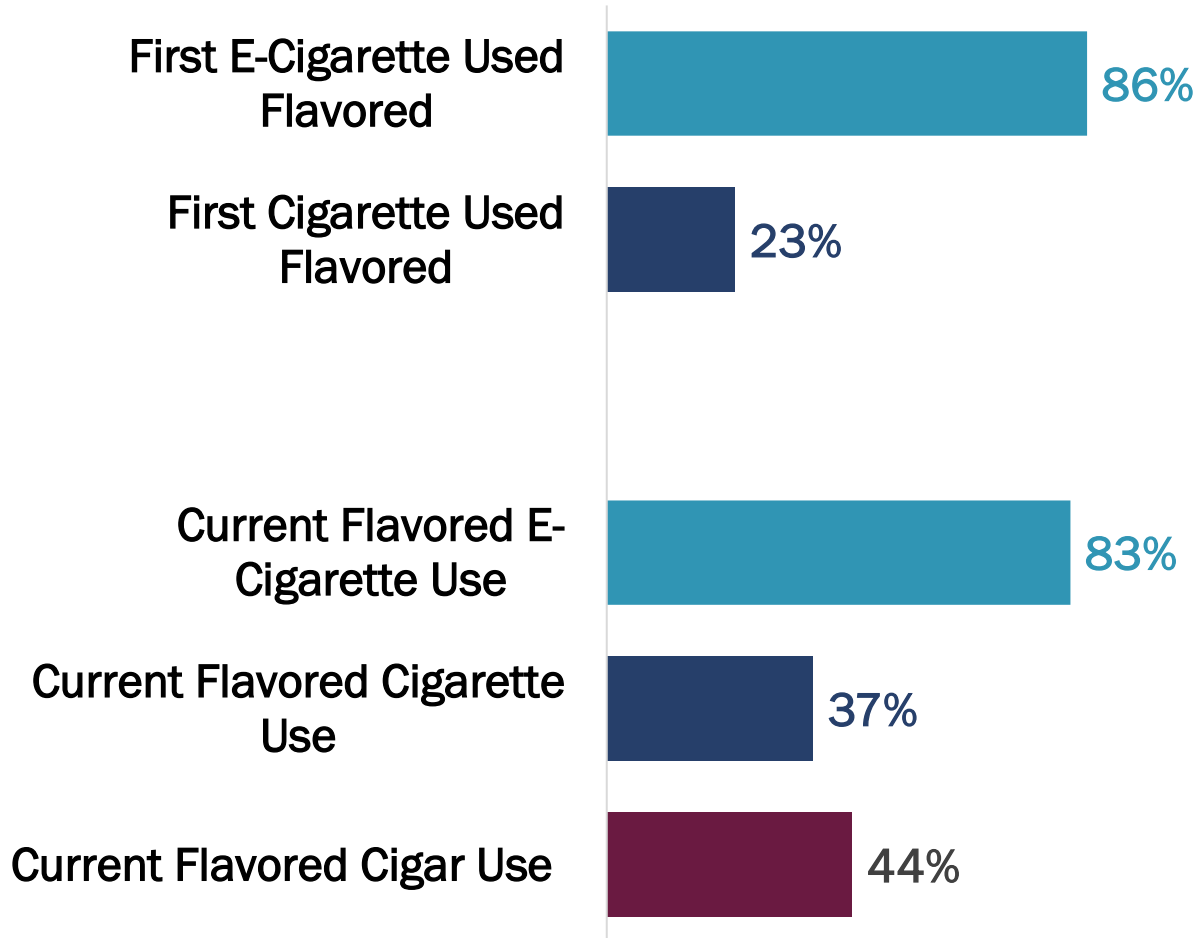
Over half of young adults in Vermont believe it is **very easy** for underage persons to buy e-cigarettes or EVP. (2022 YAS)

Youth Who Use E-Cigarettes Also Use Alcohol, Cannabis or Cigarettes and Are More Likely to Report Poor Mental Health.

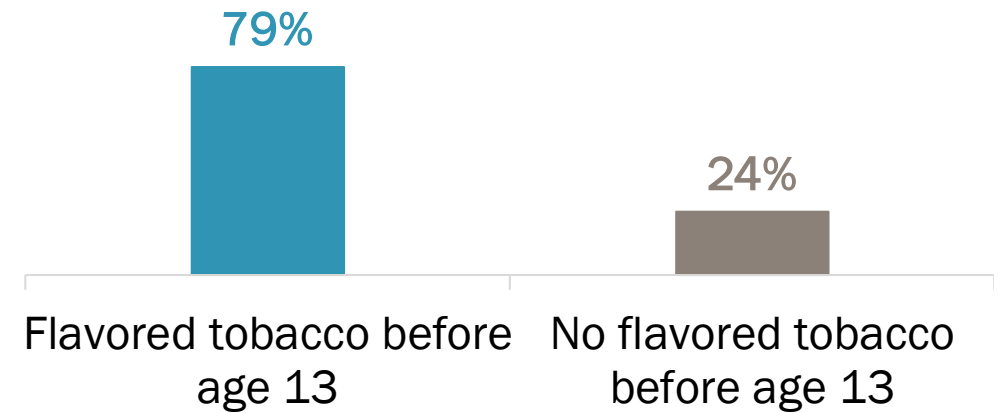
Current Substance Use and Mental Health by Current E-Cigarette Use



Many Young Vermonters Begin Use with a Flavored Product and Continue to Use Flavored Products.



Current E-Cigarette Use by Trying Flavored Tobacco Before Age Thirteen



55%

believe a flavored tobacco product is easier to use than a non-flavored product (among Vermonters aged 12-20).

Menthol Tobacco Makes Starting Easier and Quitting Harder

- 54% of youth start by using menthol
- Menthol is marketed as smooth to make it easier to smoke, but it is harder to quit
- Menthol numbs the throat to hide harsh tobacco smoke
- Tobacco companies target, youth, African Americans, and LGBTQ people with menthol
- In 2019 and in 2020, sales of menthol-flavored cigarettes made up 37% of all cigarette sales in the U.S.—the highest proportion since major tobacco companies were first required to report those data to the federal government in 1967.

Has this worked elsewhere?

- As of April 2022, over 150 U.S. communities have implemented laws prohibiting the sale of menthol and other flavored tobacco products.
- In 2019, Massachusetts became the first U.S. state to prohibit the sale of menthol and other flavored tobacco products.
- In November 2022 California followed suit

Massachusetts Banned All Flavors, All Products in 2019

1

Sales of flavored tobacco products decreased sharply in MA. Sales weren't impacted in other states including VT.

2

Successful cessation rates are increasing among Black and Hispanic and tobacco use rates are decreasing (BRFSS, 2019 – 2021)

3

Adult and youth tobacco rates are decreasing. Youth smoking and vaping rates have decreased to 2.9% and 17.6% in 2021 (from 4.3% and 32% in 2019)

If S.18 Becomes Law, in Addition to Decreased Initiation Can Also Anticipate Increased Cessation Activity as in MA

- * 802Quits is here to help
- * Vermont's 802Quits started offering a tailored Menthol Protocol in 2021
- * Additional counseling and incentive for each session completed
- * 2nd most popular protocol on 802Quits



Additional Vermont Tobacco Data

2020 Vermont BRFSS Tobacco Data Brief:

https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/2020_BRFSS_Tobacco_Brief_Final.pdf

Data Brief: Flavors Drive Tobacco Use in Vermont:

https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/HS_Tobacco_Flavors_Snapshot_2020_01_22.pdf

Vermont Tobacco Policy Brief:

https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/hpdp_tcp_tobacco_policy_brief.pdf

2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Report:

https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/CHS_YRBS_statewide_report.pdf

Vermont Tobacco Data Pages:

www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/HS_2019_Tobacco_Data_Pages_2022_04.pdf

Vermont Tobacco Story Map:

<https://ahs-vt.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=61d13e4de09345ac91ea997e3464fe6b>