

Alaska young adults tripled e-cigarette use in recent five-year period, report says

By: [Yereth Rosen](#) - April 15, 2023 5:59 am



Electronic cigarette products are promoted on the storefront of a South Anchorage shop, seen on April 14. A newly released report the increase in the vaping by Alaska's young adults from 2016 to 2021 was the highest in the nation. (Photo by Yereth Rosen/Alaska Beacon)

Alaska posted the nation's highest rate of increase in electronic cigarette use by young adults from 2016 to 2021, according to a [report](#) tracking patterns in all the states.

The rate of e-cigarette use by Alaskans in that age group more than tripled, from 4.8% in 2019 – the lowest rate in the nation at the time — to 15.8% in 2021, according to the report.

The report was compiled by [HealthAdvisor](#), a company owned by insurance marketer [Tranzact](#). The report uses data from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System](#).

Nationally, e-cigarette use, also known as vaping, increased dramatically during those years for young adults, according to the report. In 2016, 9.6% of Americans between 18 and 24 years old used e-cigarettes, according to the report; that jumped to 19.8% in 2021, roughly doubling.

The HealthAdvisor report has findings similar to those in the [2022 Alaska Tobacco Facts update](#) released in December by the Alaska Department of Health. That report, which focused on a younger age group, said that about a quarter of Alaska high school students regularly used e-cigarettes in 2019 and nearly half had tried vaping at least once.

A [bill](#) aimed at curbing youth e-cigarette use is being considered by the Alaska Legislature. The measure, [Senate Bill 89](#), would raise the legal age for purchase of e-cigarette products from the current 19 to 21. It would also impose Alaska's first state tax on e-cigarette products. Although municipalities around the state impose taxes on e-cigarette products, the state has not changed its tobacco taxes since 2006, a time before vaping products became widely used.

The bill is sponsored by Senate President Gary Stevens, R-Kodiak. It is pending in the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee, where it is scheduled to get its next hearing on April 21.

Lawmakers last year passed a similar bill that was also sponsored by Stevens, but Gov. Mike Dunleavy vetoed it, citing opposition to the tax provision. The tax structure in this year's bill is different from that in the bill vetoed by Dunleavy.

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