

Good morning and thank you Chairwoman Eshoo, Chairman Pallone, Congressman Walden, Congressman Burgess and members of the subcommittee on Health.

My name is Dorian Fuhrman and I am one of the cofounders of parents against vaping e-cigarettes, or PAVe, A national grassroots Organization founded by three moms in response to the youth vaping epidemic, the worst adolescent public health crises we have seen in decades.

We founded PAVe in 2018 and today we have 13 chapters in 10 states.

Our backstory:

In late 2017 we became aware of a new trend among our sons and their friends: “Juuling”. My son would return home after being out with friends and I would often find flash drives and colorful plastic caps in his pocket. Upon further examination I discovered it was an electronic nicotine delivery system called Juul. My friends and I began to compare notes. While we did not understand exactly what this entailed, we began researching this new teen trend. The real catalyst however came in April 2018 when Juul sent a representative into our sons then ninth grade class for an addiction and mental health talk. (We testified about this in July in the Congressional Oversight Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy).

When the teachers and administrators left the room, this Juul representative proceeded to talk to the ninth grade class about Juul saying that, although it was perfectly safe, they did not want the kids as customers, thus sending a very mixed message. After the talk, our boys went over to speak with the presenter. When asked what to do if a friend was addicted to nicotine, the presenter pulled out his Juul, showed the boys how it worked, called it the iPhone of vapes and said they were about to get FDA approval. We all know this was not true. The boys came home that afternoon and shared what had happened.

We began researching this company, and looked for a group like Mothers Against Drunk Driving to join. There was none. So we decided to form our own. We had modest goals at first: we reached out to doctors and psychiatrists we knew and asked for research on vaping, nicotine and adolescence. We discovered that these predatory companies targeted our kids where they live: on social media with slick, trendy, ad and promotions to target our kids. Paid influencers began launching accounts and hashtags like “vape tricks” which has over 5 million posts. We were also contacted by parents who discovered these companies advertising on homework websites - yes, homework websites!

We began to speak with schools, and in schools and researched the laws around vaping. We attended a local Tobacco 21 hearing and spoke in favor of raising the age of purchase of these products in order to keep them out of the hands of kids. The law passed.

We realized that although it was important to educate parents and educators about the dangers of vaping and these new products, many of whom did not even know about these devices, we also knew that we could make an impact speaking out about the new world our kids were living in every day. We launched our website that fall and immediately began to get emails from parents around the country who were struggling with their kids' severe nicotine addiction. These kids were vaping in record numbers and the physical effects of their nicotine addiction were tearing families apart:

The extreme explosive anger, the inability to concentrate and focus in school. On our journey, we discovered that nicotine rewires the developing adolescent brain, not only priming it for further addiction, but affecting cognitive development, mood and impulse control. We also learned that kids lungs continue to develop until the age of 25, just like their brains. These damaging flavorings, which are not regulated, may be safe for consumption but are certainly not safe to be heated at high temperatures, combined with other chemicals and particles of metal, and inhaled deep into healthy, developing lungs. And extremely high levels of a new patented "nicotine salt", higher than any we have seen before, are absorbed so efficiently into a teen's blood and brain that the effects are immediate and many report experiencing a head rush which they try to replicate each time, often vaping 24/7 and increasing the nicotine doses in order to achieve this. And it's easy. The Juul and it's copycats leave no smell and can create very little 'smoke'. We hear of kids who sleep with their Juul under their pillow or who tape them to the nightstand so they can vape in the middle of the night and it is the first thing they see when they wake up.

The emails from desperate families touched us the most. They are desperately seeking resources, information, and treatment for their e-cigarette dependent nicotine-addicted kids. The truth is that currently there is no FDA-approved treatment for this kind of teen nicotine addiction. We got an email from Kelly Kinard whose son Luka experienced seizures and had an addiction so severe he went to rehab for 39 days. He is doing well now and his mom has joined PAVE. There was the dad whose son was a star D1 baseball player and began vaping because the entire team was vaping. Now his whole baseball team is so scared of the lung illnesses that in order to try to quit vaping, they have started to use flavored nicotine pouches. There was Geri Sullivan whose only son was hospitalized for vaping related illness and now cannot play football in his senior year of high school. Ruby Johnson, whose daughter Piper was hospitalized on her way to freshman year in college. Thankfully piper is out of the hospital, has quit vaping and Ruby has joined PAVE. We hear of entire sports seasons cancelled because of vaping. Schools do not know what to do - many are purchasing vape detectors, which are often not effective, or randomly nicotine testing their students or athletes.

Parents are posting about their kids illnesses on facebook and the posts are shared hundreds of thousands of times. They all reach out to us as there are no other parents fighting for our kids safety. The list goes on... We get so many letters, it is hard to answer them all.

And that “friend who was addicted to nicotine”? That was my 14 year old son. What I did not know then but later found out is that my son had been handed a Mint Juul at the end of eighth grade by another eighth grader. He began to use it over the summer between eighth and ninth grade and when he returned home to start school in ninth grade he was surprised to see that all the kids he encountered were Juuling. It had become the new social norm. Suddenly, when kids met someone new the first question was, “what’s your flavor“, not “What school do you go to” or “What’s your favorite sport”

He began purchasing Juul online, on websites like eBay that had no age verification. Ultimately, he discovered other websites and brands that also had no age verification. And then, when he became a little older, he was able to easily purchase his Juuls at the corner store.

Now kids have dozens of brands to choose from each with their own multitude of proprietary flavors. 66% of kids don't always know there is nicotine in their vapes and more than 8 or of 10 kids begin vaping with a flavored product. And the devices have become even more stealth. Juul hides in plain sight on kids desks, looking like a flash drive that is charging in a computer. New brands like Stig are even smaller and can be hidden more easily in a child’s hand, or Suorin which looks like a highlighter pen.

Along our journey, we’ve connected with other stakeholders in this fight against what we had coined Big Tobacco 2.0. We know now that it was really Big Tobacco all along, hiding in plain sight. We have spoken at the FDA twice, with our teenage sons, we have spoken with both local and national lawmakers, and as I mentioned, we spoke in Congress this summer. We have participated in inter-agency panel discussions and, at this very moment, my co-founder is speaking at the Appropriations committee down the hall.

As we connected with these other stakeholders, on the ground in states where we are present and here in Washington, we realized that our power was our voices - and our kids have realized this too. They no longer want to be taken advantage of by predatory companies looking to line their pockets. They see their friends, many of whom are addicted to nicotine, unable to stop. They want to protect younger kids, like their own younger siblings, from beginning to use these flavored e-cigarette products.

Thankfully, my son was able to stop Juuling with a lot of support. However, this is not the case for many kids. As we know, there is no FDA approved cessation protocol for kids. Many are afraid to talk to their parents, and others who quit will fall right back into it as most of their peers are vaping. Or they will begin to smoke regular cigarettes; Kids who vape are 4x more likely to begin smoking cigarettes. You have all heard the numbers from the experts, 5 million kids are vaping today in America, almost 28% of high school

kids. Every day more scientific evidence emerges that vaping causes harm to the heart and lungs, the cardiovascular system, and now cancer. And that means we're in a race against time to protect our kids from becoming not only an entire generation of nicotine addicts but human guinea pigs for the vaping experiment overall.

I am here today representing PAVe and families around the country because we are so grateful to Chairman Pallone for his comprehensive legislation which proposes to ban these flavored tobacco products which have been addicting our kids. The FDA banned flavored cigarettes in 2009 under the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Act, except for menthol, and now we must ban all flavored tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and menthol cigarettes, to protect an entire generation of young Americans. The FDA themselves called this a 'youth vaping epidemic' last year. The numbers are even higher today. Let's stop these numbers from rising together. Thank you.

Dorian Fuhrman

Co-Founder

PAVe - Parents Against Vaping e-cigarettes

[dorian@parentsagainstvaping.org](mailto:dorian@parentsagainstvaping.org)

[parentsagainstvaping.org](http://parentsagainstvaping.org)