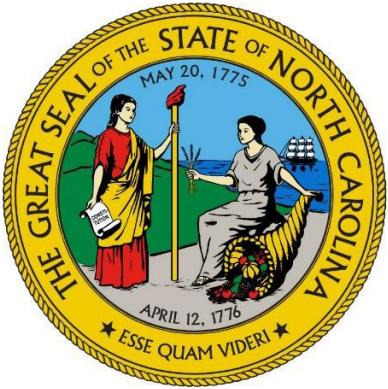


Preventing and Reducing Tobacco Use and Nicotine Addiction: Focus on Age of Sale and Retailer Permitting



Justus-Warren Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Task Force

Jim D. Martin, MS, Director of Policy and Programs

N.C. Tobacco Prevention and Control

Division of Public Health

December 10, 2021

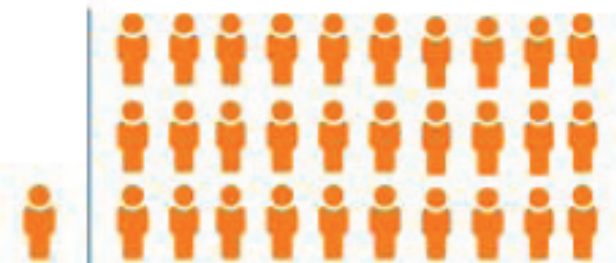
The Burden of Tobacco Use and Secondhand Smoke Exposure in NC

*Tobacco use is the #1 cause of preventable death
in North Carolina (and the U.S.)*

Smoking causes
more deaths each year
than these causes combined:



For every death,
30
sick or disabled



From Vision 2020, NC Tobacco Prevention & Control Branch

The Health Consequences
of Smoking—50 Years of Progress

A Report of the Surgeon General

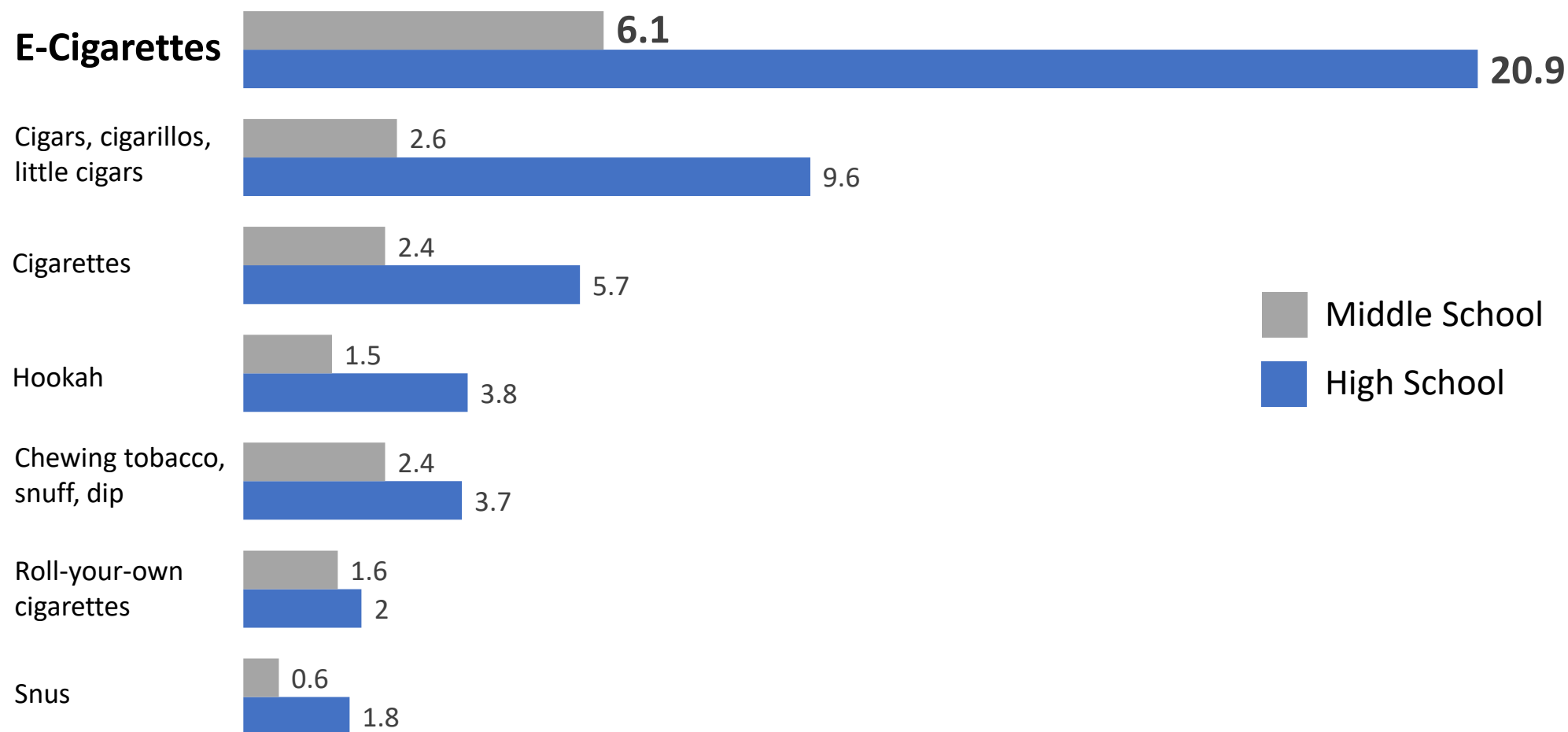


U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

95%
of tobacco users
start before the age of
21

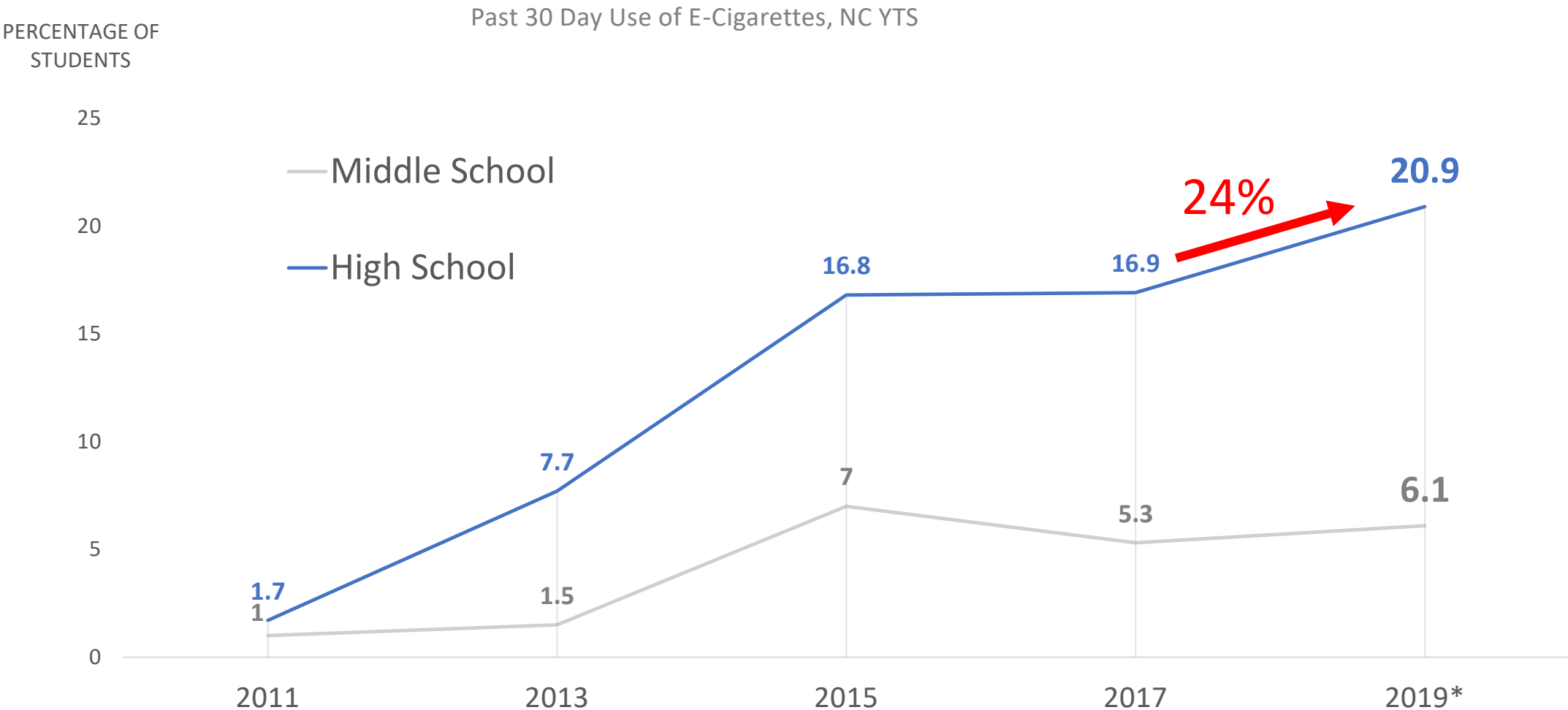
E-cigarettes #1 Product Used by Youth

Past 30 Day Tobacco Product Use, NC YTS 2019



2019 estimates may not represent the full population due to low response rate

E-Cigarette Use Continues to Increase



*2019 estimates may not represent the full population due to low response rate

Nicotine Poses Unique Dangers to the Developing Human

Nicotine use while adolescent brain is developing can disrupt brain circuit formation —

Poisonings occur among users via ingestion of nicotine liquid, absorption through skin, and inhalation



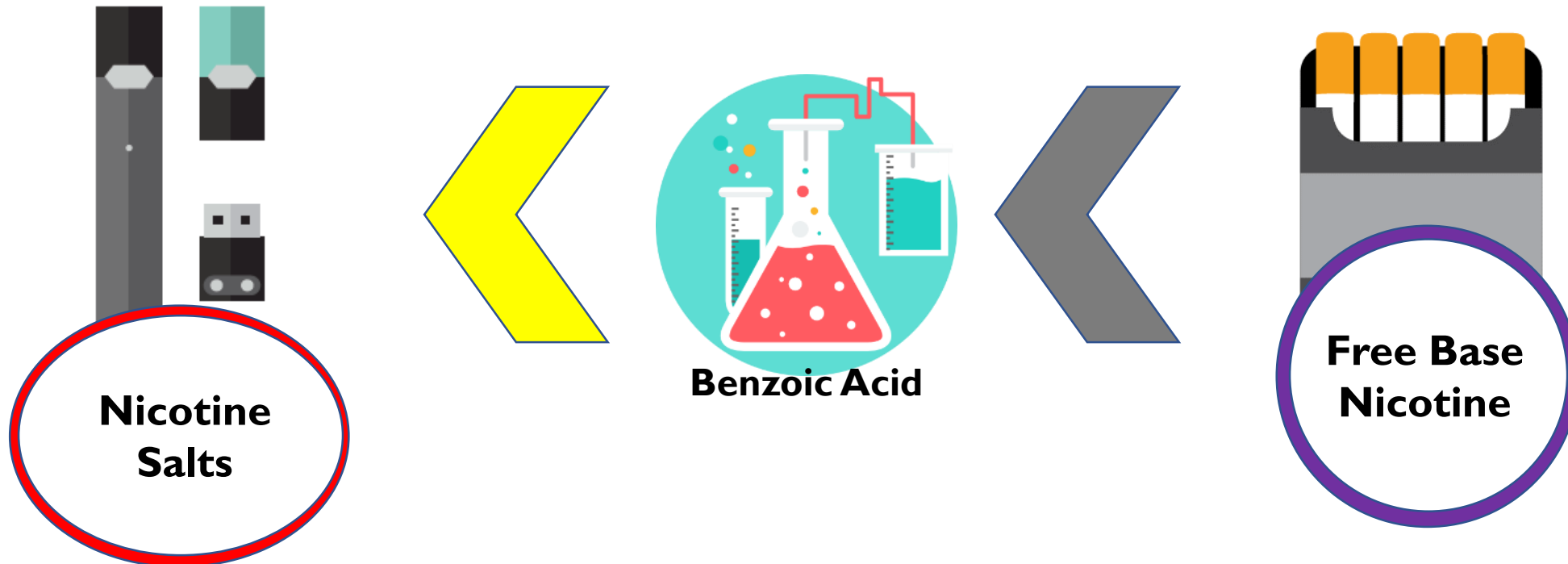
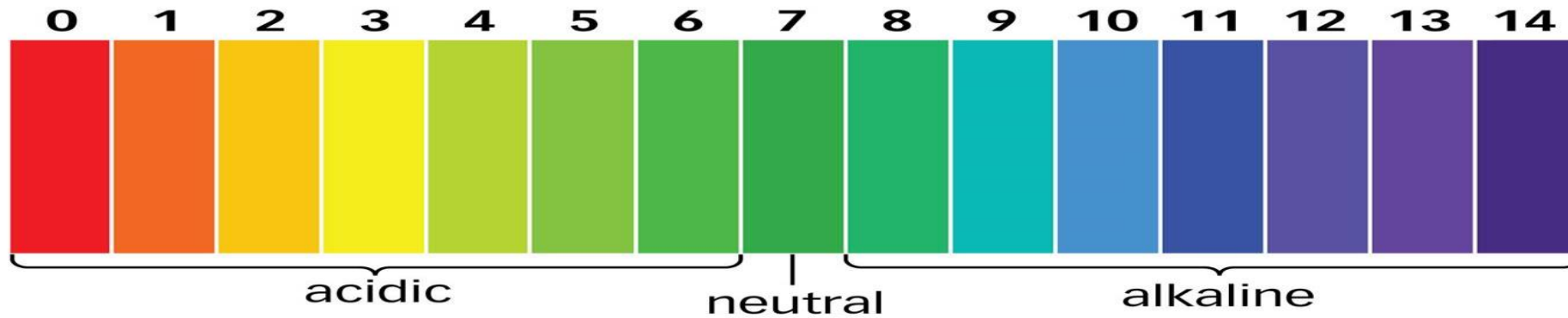
["Teen Camera Club on Day 324"](#)

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Nicotine is toxic to developing fetuses and impairs fetal brain and lung development

And associated with combustible tobacco use as well as other drug use

Nicotine salts allow high levels of nicotine to be inhaled more easily



69.9% of young people who currently use e-cigarettes want to use one **within an hour** of waking up

19.4% want to use within **5 minutes** of waking

NC School Study Conducted in Collaboration with CDC



**Online survey of
574 school staff**



**35 in-person semi-
structured interviews
with school staff**



**Environmental assessment:
(e.g. collected e-cigarettes
confiscated by 6 schools for
student policy violations)**

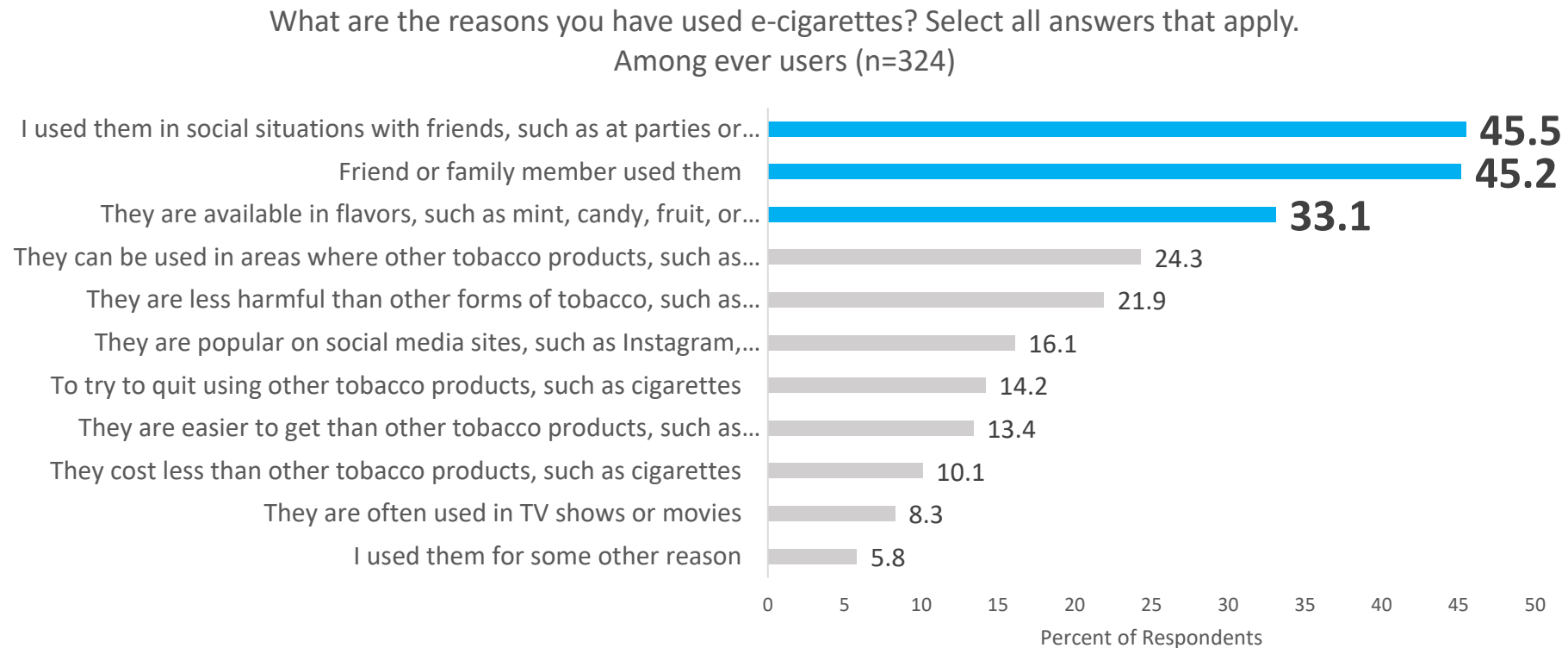


E-cigarette devices and e-liquids confiscated by 6 N.C. Schools

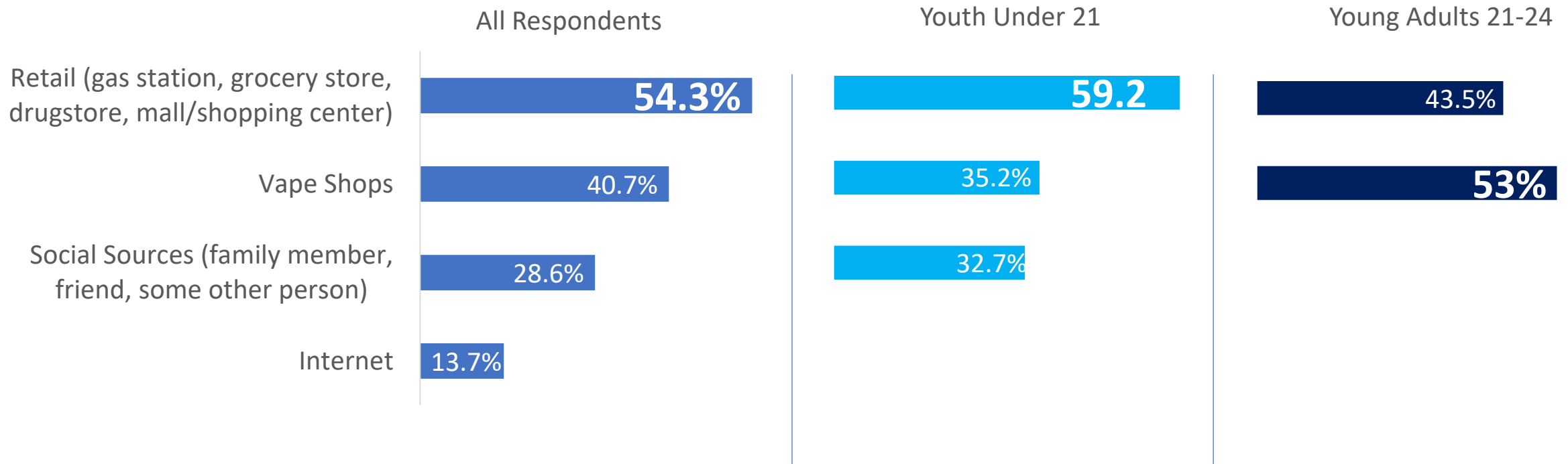
School Staff Reported that E-cigarettes are Somewhat or Very...



Young people use e-cigarettes for social reasons and because they come in flavors



Young people primarily get their e-cigarettes from retail locations and vape shops



Categories with fewer than 25 responses not reported

The most common social source of e-cigarettes among youth aged 13-17 is **from a friend** under the age of 21

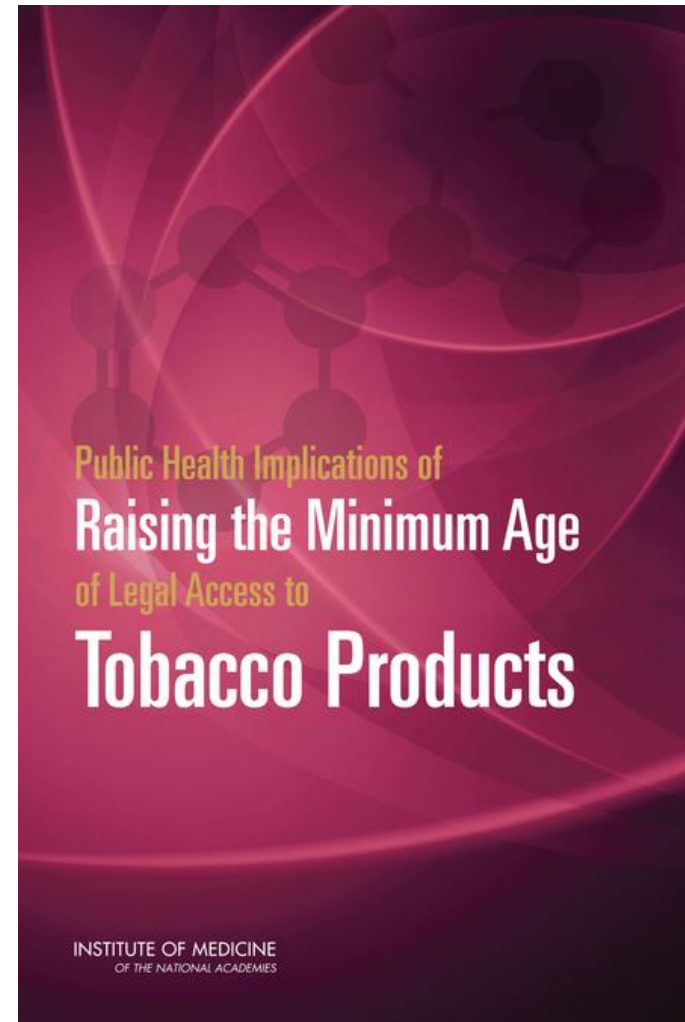
TOBACCO

~~eighteen~~ twenty-one

Raising the purchase age of tobacco and nicotine products would result in 4.2 million fewer years of life lost for today's children.

Improve maternal, fetal and infant outcomes by reducing the likelihood of maternal and paternal smoking.

The U.S. Surgeon General and the National Academy of Medicine have identified the licensing of tobacco retailers as an **evidence-based** measure to reduce tobacco sales to youth.



Tobacco 21 Policies

Tobacco 21: The Law of the Land



Federal Tobacco 21 is in effect. State and local work continues.

- In December 2019, Congress increased the federal minimum legal sales age of all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, from 18 to 21.
- While a majority of states **(39 states)** as of November 2021, have increased their minimum tobacco sales age to 21 to match federal law, North Carolina's minimum sales age remains 18.

Federal Synar Amendment

- Federal law, known as the Synar Amendment, requires states to annually inspect a random sample of tobacco retailers to determine what percentage are selling to underage youth.
- If the percentage of underage sales goes above **20%**, the state may be forced to forfeit **millions** of federal Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment block grant monies that fund prevention, treatment, and recovery initiatives, such as funding to address the opioid epidemic.
- Recent high violation rates in North Carolina have sounded the alarm to focus on reducing sales to youth.

Licensing or Permitting of Tobacco Product Retailers is an Effective Means to Reduce Sales to Youth

- Currently, N.C. is one of **only 10 states** without a tobacco retailer permitting system
- Tobacco retailer permitting is beneficial because:
 - Allows the state to know where tobacco products are being sold; .
 - Allows the state to inspect for responsible retail practices; (*Alcohol Law Enforcement (ALE) does not have inspection authority for tobacco retailers like it has for alcohol retailers*)
 - Provides a more effective mechanism for enforcing the law when violations are detected; and
 - Provides a funding mechanism for inspections, retailer education and enforcement can result in large reductions in youth use of tobacco products, especially e-cigarettes.
- The N.C. ABC Commission is well situated to oversee permitting of tobacco retailers.

Tobacco 21 Interagency Workgroup

NC Department of Health and Human Services

- NC Division of Public Health
- NC Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services

NC Department of Public Safety

- Alcohol Law Enforcement

NC Alcohol Beverage Control Commission

NC Department of Revenue

An Effective Law to Raise Tobacco Sales Age to 21

- Applies to all tobacco products
- **Requires retailer permit**
- Requires ID checks
- Imposes minimal penalties for purchasers under 21
- Holds retailers responsible for violations
- Requires signage
- Requires employee training
- Prohibits internet sales to people under 21
- Allows local government authority
- Provides enough time for the state to implement and to educate retailers about the new law

Source:

https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/tobacco_control_programs/surveillance_evaluation/tobacco-21-policy-evaluation/index.html

Conclusions

- N.C. has experienced an **alarming increase** in the use of tobacco products by young people—especially e-cigarettes, which are mostly acquired from retailers.
- It's important to **prevent** the sale of tobacco products to people under age 21.
- To **match federal law and most other states**, N.C. needs to raise the age of purchase to 21.
- N.C. is at risk of **losing millions** of federal dollars for substance use disorder treatment if it does not effectively prevent underage sales of tobacco products
- A tobacco retailer permitting is an **evidence-based** measure to reduce tobacco sales to youth.
- N.C. needs a **level playing field** among tobacco retailers—making it easier to educate and inspect all retailers to reduce illegal sales to underage youth.

