Emerging Issues

Tobacco
The emergence of vapor products (also known as e-cigarettes) has caused serious concern in Washington State.

- A growing body of research indicates electronic cigarettes and vapor products have unique health risks that are not yet completely understood.
- A major concern of stakeholders is that these products may again normalize smoking in public places.
- According to the U.S. Surgeon General there are strong associations between use of e-cigarettes and other tobacco products.

Vapor products are the most commonly used nicotine product among youth. One product increasingly popular among youth is JUUL. These devices emit little to know odor or aerosol and can be easily concealed. They closely resemble a USB flash drive and can be charged as such, so while they are hard to detect, teachers find students using them in classrooms and bathrooms.

JUULs come in an assortment of flavors that appeal to youth and the amount of nicotine in one pod is equivalent to that in one pack of cigarettes. These are among the reasons they are currently being investigated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
- E-cigarettes are not safe for youth, young adults, pregnant women, or adults who do not currently use tobacco products.
- People who have never smoked or used other tobacco products or e-cigarettes should not start doing so.
- E-cigarettes have the potential to benefit adults who smoke cigarettes and are not pregnant, if used as a complete substitute for regular cigarettes and other smoked tobacco products.
- While e-cigarettes have the potential to benefit some people and harm others, scientists still have much to learn about whether e-cigarettes are effective for quitting smoking,
- Additional research is needed to understand long-term health effects.

More information about vapor products can be found on the Department of Health website.