



Virginia Youth Tobacco Projects Research Coalition

This is the inaugural edition of the Virginia Youth Tobacco Projects (VYTP) Research Coalition newsletter. In each issue, you can look forward to updates related to youth tobacco prevention including upcoming events, funding and collaboration opportunities, ongoing initiatives, and spotlights on our members and grantees.

If you would like to contribute content to a future newsletter, please reach out to us at vytp@vcu.edu.

If you would like to stop receiving these emails, please click 'unsubscribe' at the bottom of the email.

[Visit our Website](#)

VDH/TCP Policy and Programs Update

Hello from the VDH Tobacco Control Program (TCP)!

We wanted to start with a brief introduction and then in future newsletters, we plan on sharing new tobacco and nicotine resources, trends and data. In case you don't know us, TCP focuses on preventing tobacco and nicotine use, eliminating exposure to secondhand smoke and vapor, and providing free cessation services across the Commonwealth. The TCP staff work statewide in supporting tobacco free policies as well as promoting our free and confidential tobacco and nicotine quit services - [Quit Now Virginia](#).

Check out [Vape Free VA](#) as a one-stop vaping resource guide for youth, young adults and their support circles (e.g. parents, coaches, educators, physicians). Many of our flyers and resources can be found online. Please reach out to tobaccocontrol@vdh.virginia.gov if you have any questions about social media posts, programs for schools

Upcoming Events

VYTP Research Coalition Meeting

Join us for the Annual VYTP Research Coalition Meeting on **Friday, February 20, 2026** in Richmond, VA.

Registration is now open and free to attend.

This will be a **hybrid event**, so whether you're joining us in person or tuning in virtually, we look forward to seeing you there!

For any questions or to get in touch, please email us at vytp@vcu.edu.

VYTP RESEARCH COALITION MEETING 2026



SAVE THE DATE

02
MONTH

20
DAY

26
YEAR

LARRICK STUDENT CENTER

900 TURPIN ST, RICHMOND, VA 23219

[MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW](#)

Champions for Youth Summit

Join the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY) and Prevention Connections (PC) at the third Champions for Youth Summit on **May 4 – 6, 2026** in Reston, VA.

Early bird tickets are on sale now.

Attendees will explore innovative strategies and best practices addressing critical issues such as tobacco and nicotine use, substance use, childhood obesity, and other intersecting youth health challenges.



Champions for Youth Summit 2026

Monday, May 4 – Wednesday, May 6, 2026

Hyatt Regency at Reston Town Center

Early Bird Pricing Available

VFHY/VYTP Grantee Spotlight

Samantha Margherio

What made you interested in joining the VYTP Research Coalition?

I am eager to be connected with a community of folks in Virginia who also care about improving health outcomes for local teens. I hope to build partnerships that share research and outreach ideas and resources for this shared mission.



Can you explain the focus of your research?

My goal is to build tiered, cost-effective substance use prevention programs to be disseminated in rural schools. I focus both on disseminating existing evidence-based universal prevention programs and on understanding how we can improve the effectiveness of secondary prevention programs for those most at-risk of problematic substance use trajectories, such as youth with behavior and academic challenges. Growing up in a rural community made me especially passionate about increasing access to and affordability of effective programming within rural spaces.

What is a hidden gem or place that you enjoy visiting in Virginia?

Friday nights in Floyd, VA are magical! The live music flowing from every direction, carefree dancing in the streets, artisan booths of handmade treasures, and delicious ice cream from the Country Store creates a blissful atmosphere.

Ongoing Initiatives and Research

The Confiscated Vapes Fall 2025 Bulletin is Available!

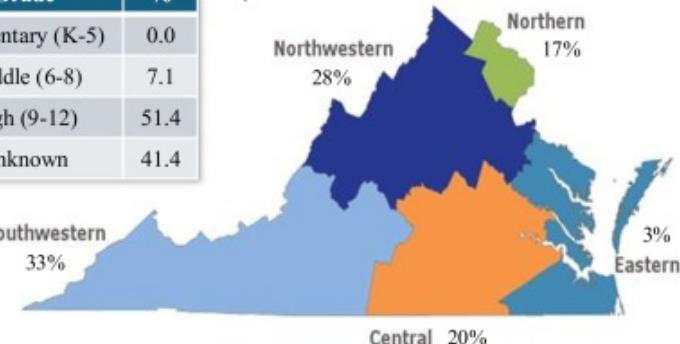
The VCU Team is **collecting confiscated vaping materials** from local schools. They are testing these materials for adulterants in an effort to get a better idea of the dangers present in these products. If you are interested in participating contact Dr. Cobb at cobbco@vcu.edu and she will help to facilitate the collection. If you are looking for more information about the project and educational resources, click [here](#).

Characterization of Vaping Products Confiscated from Virginia Schools: August 2025 Update

Acquisition	#
Friend or peer	110
Purchased themselves	60
Parent/guardian	7
Sibling	5
Other family member	11
Stole it	18
Found it	14

Grade	%
Elementary (K-5)	0.0
Middle (6-8)	7.1
High (9-12)	51.4
Unknown	41.4

1,287 submissions from 2024-25



Examples of e-liquids from nicotine vapes

Submissions

- 14% advertised as **cannabinoid**-based vapes
- 83% advertised as **nicotine**-based vapes
- 3% paraphernalia or no information online

Most Common Brands	#	Most Common Brands	#
Geek Bar	508	Elfbar	51
Raz	123	Vuse	41
Lost Mary	100	Mr. Fog	29

Cannabinoid Results

- 73% contained a mixture of THC analogs
- Synthetic analogs identified: $\Delta 8$ -THC, $\Delta 8$ -THCP, HHC, $\Delta 6a,10a$ -THC, THCA
- Cannabinoid concentrations ranged from 28% to 90%

Nicotine Results

- “5% nicotine” vapes found to contain anywhere from 1% to 4% nicotine
- Ethanol (up to 6%) found in 4% of nicotine vapes

Novel Findings

- Microbiologicals** (coliform, yeast, or aerobic count) were found in 3 nicotine vape e-liquids and 2 nicotine vape aerosols → users are inhaling microbes into lungs
- 11 **dual chamber devices** (vapes with 2 separate e-liquids included) were submitted
 - 5 nicotine-based & 6 cannabinoid-based

Product examples



Nicotine vapes



THC vapes



E-liquid positive for coliform



Request Updates



Request a Presentation

SUPPORT FOR QUITTING VAPES:

EX Program – Text DitchVape to 88709 or visit <https://join.exprogram.com/>

Study Findings and Resources

Research with LGBTQ+ youth in Virginia sheds light on ENDS use and how prevention efforts can be strengthened. View findings and recommendations below.

DID YOU KNOW?

LGBTQ+ youth are more likely to use vapes and other electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) than their cisgender and heterosexual peers. This is especially true for those who identify as transgender, those who experience discrimination, and Black and Hispanic LGBTQ+ people.

Many youth who use ENDS do so to cope with identity-related issues. Many also report being introduced to ENDS through social settings like parties and casual hangouts.



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Support your friends and family.

Check in on them and let them know that you're here for them. Give your loved ones space to talk about their issues if they want to open up, and refer them to counseling services if needed.

Engage in hobbies that don't involve vapes.

Find other activities by yourself or with friends like going for a walk or meditating. Use alternatives like fidget toys when you're feeling stressed.

Refer friends to vape cessation/prevention programs.

Check your state/local health department for regional programs. Alternatively, see if there are any local support groups that you can join.

Get involved in student well-being advocacy groups.

Getting directly involved and making your voice heard can make a difference in the health of your peers on campus and beyond.

This work was funded by the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth via the Virginia Youth Tobacco Projects Research Coalition.



Help with Recruitment - Share these Flyers!

Attention and Social Experiences Research Study

for Teens 15 to 18 Years Old

What

A study to learn how teen's social experiences and friendships influence risky behaviors and what factors may protect against them.

Who

Teens 15 to 18 years old with attention problems and their Caregiver (age 18+). Must (a) speak English and (b) have a same-sex Peer (with or without attention problems) and their Caregiver who are both willing to participate.

What's involved in this research study?

- 1) Eligibility Session (Virtual; Up to 1 hour)
- 2) Teen/Peer Questionnaires (Virtual; 1 hour × 2)
Caregiver Questionnaires (Virtual; 1 hour)
- 3) Teen & Peer Session (In-person or virtual; 2 hours)

Compensation

Up to \$120 for Teens & Peers

Up to \$35 for Caregivers

For more information:

Go to redcap.link/vtbuddystudy.

Or contact the Study Team:

(540) 231-3570 (ext. 13570) | teenlab@vt.edu



Teen Lab

Virginia Tech | Department of Psychology



SCAN ME



Virginia Tech IRB #25-165



DOES YOUR TEEN HAVE ASTHMA?

We are looking for youth with asthma (14-17 years) and a parent/caregiver to participate in a study with VCU researchers!

- This study is examining factors that could protect youth with asthma in Richmond who identify as Black or African American from using tobacco or being around secondhand smoke.
- You or your child **do not** need to use tobacco to participate in this study. We are interested in learning how individuals make decisions not to use tobacco products, as well as situations when they might use tobacco.
- You can receive up to \$80 for participating and your child can receive up to \$110.
- The study includes a single research session (remote or on VCU's campus) that will last about 90 minutes. You and your child will complete questionnaires about asthma, tobacco use, and secondhand smoke exposure, among other factors.
- Then your child will complete surveys on an app on their smartphone several times a day for 11 days. These surveys will take about 5 minutes to complete.
- After we have collected data from all families, we will invite some families to meet with us again in about 6 months to go over study findings and make sure we have done a good job understanding what we found.

To find out more, call Dr. Robin Everhart's research team in the Dept. of Psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University (828-6093, reverhart@vcu.edu).

VYTP Research Coalition | 100 W. Franklin St | Richmond, VA 23220 US

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