

# U.S. FDA to Launch Campaign Against E-cigarette Use Among Youth

By Reuters Staff

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(Reuters) - Hot on the heels of its proposal to lower nicotine levels in cigarettes, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Tuesday announced plans for an education campaign to discourage use of electronic cigarettes among youth.

The plan follows the agency's proposal last month to both lower nicotine in combustible cigarettes and extend by four years the date by which e-cigarette manufacturers will be required to apply for authorization to sell their products.

The extension means e-cigarette makers can sell their products for four more years before having to apply for permission to sell them.

Its new policy "aims to strike a careful balance between the regulation of all tobacco products, and the opportunity to encourage development of innovative tobacco products that may be less dangerous than combustible cigarettes," FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb said in a statement.

Gottlieb is walking a tightrope between satisfying the interests of public health advocates, who like the idea of lowering nicotine levels in cigarettes, and e-cigarette companies that have been lobbying for a lighter regulatory hand.

The FDA's public health campaign could go some way to mitigate concerns among public health advocates that the agency's extension of the compliance dates will allow products with flavors that may appeal to kids on the market longer than they might otherwise have been.

More than 2 million middle- and high-school students were current users of e-cigarettes and other vaping devices in 2016, and half of all middle and high school students who used a tobacco product of some sort used two or more.

The education campaign will be part of the agency's "The Real Cost" campaign to discourage cigarette use and begin this fall. A full-scale campaign will be launched in 2018.

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