



Be Alert to Tobacco Advertisements

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You may be noticing a sudden surge in advertisements about the negative effects of tobacco. As a result of a lawsuit that the U.S. Department of Justice brought against tobacco companies asserting that they intentionally hid the health effects of smoking, companies were ordered in 2006 to issue “corrective statements” about the health implications of tobacco use.

Eleven years later, the ads are now running in national news outlets, including television and newspapers, from November 2017 through March 2018. The ads address topics of adverse health effects of smoking and second hand smoke, the lack of health benefits from “light” cigarettes, addictiveness and manipulation of cigarette design to maximize nicotine delivery.

As a statement from the Campaign for Tobacco- Free Kids and partner organizations says, *Make no mistake: The tobacco companies are not running these ads voluntarily or because of a legal settlement. They were ordered to do so by a federal court that found they engaged in massive wrongdoing that has resulted in “a staggering number of deaths per year, an immeasurable amount of human suffering and economic loss, and a profound burden on our national health care system,” as U.S. District Judge Gladys Kessler wrote in her 2006 final opinion. (https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/press-releases/2017_11_20_corrective_statements)*

Tobacco products are still marketed to vulnerable populations including youth and those living with mental health conditions and substance use disorders. Smoking continues to be one of the top preventable causes of disease and death in our country. This ad campaign can provide an opportunity to bring attention to the continually devastating effects of smoking and other forms of nicotine. A 2017 survey by National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) indicates that marijuana and vaping of nicotine products are now more popular than cigarettes among teenagers (<https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/trends-statistics/monitoring-future>).

The study also showed that teens were sometimes not aware that flavored vaping products contained nicotine.

Health care providers, including social workers, have opportunities to address smoking and nicotine product use with the individuals and families that they serve. Motivational interviewing and brief cognitive-behavioral therapy are effective in reducing smoking and social workers are skilled in these interventions. Clinical social workers may also have the opportunity to report on smoking cessation as a quality measure.

NASW is a part of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids Coalition and a supporter of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) *Tips from Former Smokers Campaign*. The CDC, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and NASW recognize the critical role of social workers in promoting smoking cessation and have resources for providers:

- **CDC *Tips From Former Smokers***
[Mental Health Care Professionals: Help Your Patients Quit Smoking](#)
- **SAMHSA Tobacco Page**
<https://www.samhsa.gov/atod/tobacco>
- **NASW Health Resources**
[Practice Perspectives - Implementing Smoking Cessation Into Your Social Work Practice](#)