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## ***Students Working Against Tobacco Tackle Disposable E-cigarettes on Not A Lab Rat Day***



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**MILTON, FLA.** —The third annual *Not A Lab Rat Day* is taking place on Wednesday, Oct. 21 and Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) is educating about the potential dangers of disposable e-cigarettes. SWAT, Florida's youth-led movement to combat the tobacco and e-cigarettes industries, is encouraging their peers to protect themselves and future generations from nicotine addiction by fighting back against the industries.

Since its inception, *Not A Lab Rat Day* has empowered youth statewide to stand up and declare that they refuse to be Big Tobacco's "lab rats" as we discover the long-term health effects of e-cigarettes.

**"While certain products are no longer sold, e-cigarette use is still a major public health concern. We don't know the long-term risks of these products and our youth are not the e-cigarette industry's lab rats," said Kristie Beckstrom, Santa Rosa County SWAT Coordinator.**

Disposable e-cigarettes like Puff Bars, Stig, Smok and HQD are not covered under the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) flavor policy since they are not cartridge or pod-based.<sup>1</sup> However, the FDA sent warning letters to several disposable e-cigarette makers, Puff Bars being one, demanding they remove their products from the market. Disposable e-cigarettes come in bright colored packaging and kid-appealing flavors including Sour Apple, Banana Ice, and O.M.G. (Orange, Mango, Guava).<sup>2</sup> These new e-cigarettes have a similar sleek design as JUUL, but they are designed for one-time use. JUUL's flavored pods have been pulled from the market, but new flavored products like Puff Bars, Stig, Smok and HQD are becoming popular among youth and taking JUUL's spotlight.

In Santa Rosa County, the goal for *Not a Lab Rat Day* is to spread awareness to middle and high school youth. Schools, such as Hobbs Middle, Central, and Jay High will participate in this day by promoting this campaign and educating students on the dangers of e-cigarettes.

The e-cigarette industry continues to disregard the best interest of communities by manipulating product design to get around FDA regulations. In Florida, 25.6% of high school students used e-cigarettes, in 2019.<sup>3</sup> This *Not a Lab Rat Day*, SWAT members encourage youth and young adults to educate and become familiar with the dangers of

disposable e-cigarettes and talk to others in the community about these products to help push for change.

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### **About *Not A Lab Rat Day***

*Not A Lab Rat Day* will be observed annually on the third Wednesday of October to bring awareness to e-cigarette use among youth, encourage youth to stand up against Big Tobacco and the e-cigarette industry, and to push for change within their communities.

### **About Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT)**

SWAT is Florida's statewide youth organization working to mobilize, educate and equip Florida youth to revolt against and de-glamorize Big Tobacco and the e-cigarette industry. SWAT is a united movement of empowered youth working towards a tobacco free future.

To learn more about Students Working Against Tobacco, visit [www.swatflorida.com](http://www.swatflorida.com) or follow us on Instagram at [@swatflorida](https://www.instagram.com/swatflorida).

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<sup>1</sup> What are Puff Bars? Truth Initiative. February 14, 2020. <https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/emerging-tobacco-products/what-are-puff-bars>. [Accessed July 29, 2020]

<sup>2</sup> What are Puff Bars? Truth Initiative. February 14, 2020. <https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/emerging-tobacco-products/what-are-puff-bars>. [Accessed July 29, 2020]

<sup>3</sup> Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS), Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology, 2019. [Accessed July 29, 2020]