Social Media

Social media can be a great advocacy tool—especially if you want to reach a larger audience with limited and minimal resources. Social media platforms provide tracking analytics in which users are able to monitor views that will aid in the program deliverables and outcomes. Consider who you are trying to reach before posting. If your goal is to gain more national attention, Twitter may be the best platform to use. If you want to share an article or resource related to Kick Butts Day, Facebook would be the best option. And keep in mind that on Instagram, engagement is higher if you utilize “Instagram Stories” along with posting photos on your feed. Feel free to get creative by using your own hashtags, making the statistics relevant to your community, and tagging key stakeholders. The image below is an example of how social media can be used as an advocacy tool. During the 2019 CIAA, Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association, Tournament the YES! Youth Staff educated hundreds of young people and decision-makers on the harmful effects of tobacco-use. The youth created a hashtag #TooWokeToSmoke to help spread their message and recruited other youth to participate from around the nation.

YES! Charlotte Youth Staff advocate for a tobacco-free and Juul free generation during 2019 CIAA Tournament (Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association) #TooWokeToSmoke
There is at least one store selling tobacco within a 10-minute walk of almost 80% of public schools. So why does this number jump to 11 stores when the public school has more low-income students? #TobaccoTargetsMe #KickButtsDay

Looking around my community, I wonder why so many of my neighbors are smoking. Maybe because there are up to 10x more tobacco ads in Black neighborhoods than in other neighborhoods? #TobaccoTargetsMe #KickButtsDay

How come the tobacco industry spends almost 1 million dollars per hour to get me hooked on their poison, but barely spends anything on helping me quit? #TobaccoTargetsMe #KickButtsDay

Youth are 16x more likely to use Juul than older age groups, but only 37% of young adults know that Juul contains nicotine. #TobaccoTargetsMe #KickButtsDay

North Carolina only spends 99 cents per person who smokes to help them quit, compared to the national average of $2.10. #TobaccoTargetsMe #KickButtsDay

North Carolina spent $2.1 million overall on tobacco prevention last year. The CDC recommends $99.3 million dollars be spent annually. That’s a problem. #TobaccoTargetsMe #KickButtsDay

Studies find that although Black people and white people use tobacco at similar rates, Black people are more likely than their white counterparts to die from a tobacco-related disease. Typically, tobacco retailers are located in communities with a larger proportion of Black, Latinx, and low-income populations. For more information, check out: https://truthinitiative.org/news/tobacco-social-justice-issue-racial-and-ethnic-minorities

Juul’s youth prevention program pledged $10 million this year after the company was investigated by the FDA. The ethics of this move are questionable, as in-house prevention programs have a history of being inefficient in funds and sometimes even manipulate youth to underestimate the problems tobacco brings. Don’t be fooled; Juul still knows that youth are their highest user base and they will continue to undermine our health for their profit.
The tobacco industry makes it their goal to target Native and Indigenous communities by marketing their products around reservations.

Suggested image:

Infographic to share on social media and/or print and share:

Smoking adversely affects not only individual health, but creates an unnecessary economic burden on our state. In North Carolina, over $3.8 billion dollars goes towards treating tobacco related illnesses, with $931 million of that being from Medicaid. Advocate to diminish these burdens on our state by educating your representatives.

See the YES! website for the printable version.
Historically marginalized communities have always been targeted by big tobacco through community events, scholarships, sponsorships, and general advertising. By dividing the population into identifying subgroups, the data shows that some groups suffer disproportionately from tobacco use. #TobaccoTargetsMe #KickButtsDay #TooWokeToSmoke

Suggested images:

1. [Image 1](http://tobacco.stanford.edu/tobacco_main/images_body.php?token1=fm_img8592.php)
2. [Image 2](https://tobaccofreeca.com/story-of-inequity/lgbtq/)
3. [Image 3](https://csts.ua.edu/minorities/minorities-tobacco-recent-struggles/)
4. [Image 4](https://tobaccofreeca.com/story-of-inequity/american-indian/)
The graphic above is from the Minnesota Department of Public Health. This data reflects current national trends around e-cigarette use among youth.

North Carolina’s youth prevention programs have been immensely effective, cutting teen rates from close to 40% in 2000 to about 26% in 2009. Recently though, rates have risen again amid NC cutting prevention funding as well as the rise of emerging products such as e-cigs. Because we know that youth prevention programs can be effective we need to continue to fund them to reverse these negative trends.

https://domain.me/kids-and-advertising/

The tobacco industry makes cigarettes appealing to youth by creating products that have bright, inviting colors. They also give products “kid friendly” flavors such as fruit and bubblegum to get them hooked from an early age.
Since 2011, there has been an **894% increase in high school students use of e-cigarettes**. Almost 28.8% of high schoolers in North Carolina use tobacco; 16.9% of these tobacco products are e-cigarettes. There is currently **no recurring** funding that goes to prevent youth from using commercial tobacco products on a daily basis in the future, even though it’s the leading cause of preventable death in NC. It’s imperative that our elected officials allocate $17 million annually for teen tobacco use prevention programs. Our lives depend on it.

**Letters and Emails to Your Representatives**

Dear Senator/Representative _______________,

My name is _______________ and I’m with ____(organization)__. Here, you can introduce more specific information about your organization and its goals, mission, etc.

I’m writing to educate you about the need for a recurring fund of $17 million for statewide tobacco prevention programs in North Carolina. In 2017, 12.1% of North Carolinian high schoolers smoked cigarettes compared to the 8.8% of high schoolers nationally. This jumped to 22.1% of high schoolers who used e-cigarettes in NC versus the average national rate of 13.2%.

North Carolina received $450.5 million in settlement payments and taxes from big tobacco in 2018, but comparatively our state only paid $2.1 million in tobacco prevention the same year. This only meets 2.1% of the CDC’s annual spending target in tobacco prevention. Overall, our state only spends 99 cents per person who smokes to help them quit, versus the national average of $2.10.

In the United States, tobacco use is the largest preventable cause of disease and death. The smoke of cigarettes alone kills over 480,000 citizens annually. It’s imperative that we tackle this problem head on, starting with adequately funding statewide programs to prevent tobacco use. **Senator/Representative ____________,** we urge you to prioritize tobacco prevention programs and combat tobacco related deaths in North Carolina.

Sincerely,
Call Script for Your Representatives

*Keep in mind, you might not be talking directly to your representative or senator and my instead be talking to a staffer. Don’t get discouraged, all calls are logged and it still influences the actions and votes of your elected officials.

Hello, my name is ________, a resident of (district) in (city name), North Carolina. I am calling today to voice my support for increasing funding towards tobacco prevention programs in the state. North Carolina suffers from some of the highest rates of smoking in the country, and especially so for high school students. Tobacco prevention helps our public health, economy, and productivity as a state. Thank you.

Tips for Adult Allies Supporting Youth-Led Advocacy

- **Encourage youth to use their unique and diverse voices.** Adults often have preconceived notions and ideas about what a “professional” letter to a representative should sound like or how a Facebook post should be structured. We also know that the notion of “professionalism” has been created by white dominant culture and erases the voices and identities of people of color. Feel free to give feedback or suggestions, but try to resist the urge to edit and change the advocacy letters, emails, or posts written by youth you are working with.

- **Ask reflective questions and share the space.** If you believe that your youth team is headed down the “wrong road” or aren’t considering all of the options in their advocacy efforts, ask them a series of questions to discuss as a group instead of immediately shutting down their idea. Ask things like, “Who are the key players around this issue in the community?” “Who are the stakeholders?” “How can we get these organizations and individuals invested in your cause?” “What steps do we need to take to build community support?”

- **Ensure that youth—particularly youth of color—are involved in the development of policies in your community.** It’s positive for youth to do advocacy work around policies that have already been created, but true youth empowerment work includes intentionally seeking the input of youth when creating new policies or initiatives.
Sources


YES! Youth Staff educating NC legislators on the Juul epidemic at the SHIFT NC’s Adolescent Health Advocacy Day 2019.