



Florence County Health Department

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NEWS RELEASE

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INDEPTH Program

Florence, WI- According to the American Lung Association about 27 of every 100 high school students reported current use of a tobacco product, including e-cigarettes. As a result of increased tobacco use among adolescents, teens are becoming addicted to nicotine. This is partially due to the nicotine concentration levels found in tobacco products such as vape oils.

Due to the increase in youth exposure and use of these products, the School District of Florence County and local partners including Northwood's Tobacco Free Coalition and the Florence County AODA and Mental Health Coalition recently supported an update in school policy around disciplinary measures for students found in possession of tobacco and/or tobacco products. Community partners recognized the importance for students to not lose valuable learning time and opportunities to succeed academically.

Research has found that providing less punitive measures for students and providing education and support for substance use and addiction provide better overall outcomes for students, parents, and schools along the continuum. As part of the revised policy surrounding a tobacco free campus, a program known as INDPETH, which stands for Intervention for Nicotine Dependence: Education, Prevention, Tobacco and Health, was implemented through collaboration with Florence County Public Health. This program is an alternative to suspension or citation for nicotine use and addresses the teen vaping epidemic in a more supportive way and is taught by a trained facilitator. It is an interactive program, by the American Lung Association, that teaches students about nicotine dependences, establishing healthy alternatives and how to kick the unhealthy addiction that got them in trouble to begin with. Those students with additional violations of the tobacco free school policy are referred to a certified counselor and community service prior to suspension and citation. This evidence-based program is recommended by the Public Health Law Center as a more effective measure to combat youth tobacco use.

The Florence County Health Department can be reached at 715-528-4837, located in the Courthouse at 501 Lake Avenue or visit our website at <http://www.florencecountywi.com/>. The Health Department is located on the second floor, 501 Lake Avenue in the Florence County Courthouse, open Monday through Friday from 8:30a.m. - 4:00 p.m. closed for lunch from 12-12:30. Need health insurance? Visit access.wi.gov to see if you qualify for benefits.

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