

TAKE DOWN TOBACCO

NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION

National [Take Down Tobacco Day](#) of Action is an annual day of action dedicated to raising awareness about the dangers of tobacco use and empowering communities to stand up against the tobacco industry's harmful influence. Organized by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free kids, this event mobilizes youth, advocates, and organizations nationwide to educate the public, promote policies that reduce tobacco use, and support those looking to quit. With tobacco-related diseases remaining a leading cause of preventable death, this day serves as a crucial reminder of the ongoing fight to protect public health, particularly among young people who are often targeted by tobacco marketing. This year, act against Big Tobacco in your school or community on April 1st to celebrate Take Down Tobacco Day.

In this attached resource guide, you'll find ways to enact positive change in your community by:

- **Organizing a Local Event** – A step-by-step guide for hosting awareness events, rallies, or school presentations.
- **Pledge Cards & Templates** – Printable or digital pledge forms for individuals committing to a tobacco-free lifestyle.
- **Sample Social Media Posts & Hashtags** – Ready-to-use social media content to help spread awareness.
- **Talking Points for Advocates** – Key messages for engaging the community or media.
- **Recognize a Tobacco-Free Business** – Information on how local businesses can support a tobacco-free environment.

No action is too small to make an impact! Share your stories and photos by emailing us at DOHTobaccoControl@state.sd.us or tagging **#SDQuits** on social media!

Visit [Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids' Take Down Tobacco](#) for additional activities, cessation materials, and more.



Organizing a Local Event

Vape Waste Collection

Objective: Raise awareness of vape waste’s environmental impact while promoting tobacco-free communities.

How to Organize:

- **Pick a Location:** Schools, parks, or public areas with noticeable vape litter.
- **Gather Supplies:** Gloves, trash bags, tongs and containers for collecting vape pods and cigarette butts.
- **Educating Participants:** Share facts on how vape waste harms the environment and wildlife.
- **Track & Display Results:** Weigh/count collected waste and create a visual impact display.
- **Promote Awareness:** Take photos and share using #TakeDownTobacco #VapeWasteCollection #SDQuits.
- **Dispose of Waste Properly:** Work with local hazardous waste facilities for safe disposal. For more information on the safe handling of vape waste, visit [EPA](#).

Quit Resource Booth

Objective: Provide support and resources for individuals ready to quit smoking or vaping.

How to Organize:

- **Set Up in a Visible Location:** Schools, community centers, or public events.
- **Resources to Offer:**
 - Cessation programs and quitting resources such as the SD QuitLine (sdquitline.com or 1-866-SD-QUITS).
 - Download the [QuitGuide](#) online to share with participants.
 - Fact sheets on the dangers of smoking/vaping.
 - NRT samples (patch, gum, lozenges) if available.
- **Interactive Engagement:**
 - A “Why I Want to Quit” Board for personal pledges.
 - A Commitment Jar where attendees can write their quit goals.
- **Have an Expert on Site:** A healthcare professional or counselor to provide advice.
- **Follow-Up:** Offer QR codes for online quit tools and encourage social media engagement.



Guest Speaker/Panel

Objective: Educate the community with real stories and expert insights on tobacco prevention and cessation.

How to Organize:

- **Choose Speakers:**
 - **Health Expert** (doctor, nurse, public health official).
 - **Youth Advocate** leading tobacco-free initiatives.
 - **Policymaker/Community Leader** supporting tobacco-free laws.
- **Event Format:**
 - **Panel Discussion (30-45 min):** Short presentations with more than one speaker talking. May also be in a Q&A format with a mix of questions for each speaker.
 - **Storytelling Event (15-30 min):** Personal testimonies from individuals impacted by tobacco.
 - **Town Hall (45-60 min):** Open discussion allowing audience participation.
- **Promotion & Engagement:**
 - Advertise via social media, flyers, and local press.
 - Use live polls or audience Q&A to make it interactive.
 - End with a Tobacco-Free Pledge for attendees.

Pledge Cards & Templates

Pledge cards can be used to encourage individuals to publicly commit to living tobacco-free or supporting tobacco prevention efforts. It's a simple yet powerful way to spread awareness and show collective action.

Step 1: Prepare your Materials

- Print pledge cards or provide a digital version. Create your own or find templates at Take Down Tobacco's [website](#).
- Set up a table or designated area with a banner reading "Take the Pledge: Tobacco-Free Future" and provide markers or pens for participants.
- Examples of [banners/pledges](#) may look like this!



Step 2: Promote Participation

- Announce the activity through flyers, school announcements, social media, and word of mouth.
- Ask participants to take a picture with their pledge and post on social media using a campaign hashtag like #TakeDownTobacco or #TobaccoFreeFuture.
- Share facts about the dangers of tobacco and vaping to encourage participation.

Step 3: Display the Pledges

- Create a pledge wall by pinning or taping signed pledge cards onto a visible board at schools, community centers, or public spaces.
- Announce how many people participated and thank them.
- Share your pledges and activities with your local newspaper, radio, or media station if available!

Social Media Posts and Hashtags

- Social media is an easy and free way to spread the word around tobacco control. Create your own, use already designed posts, or share posts from other organizations!
- The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids has designed and promoted free, [ready-to-use social media graphics](#) for your school to use.
- South Dakota Tobacco Control Program has free resources available under their [Media Library](#).
- Need hashtag ideas? Challenge youth to create their own! Some others to consider include:
 - #TakeDownTobacco
 - #TobaccoFreeFuture
 - #SDQUITS
 - #Tobacco Exposed
 - #QuitTobacco
 - #NotTodayBigTobacco
- Ready to go social media posts are a great option if you are limited on time. Here are some organizations you could check out the week/day of to share what they come up with!
 - Quit Tobacco South Dakota
 - Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
 - Truth Initiative



Talking Points & Resources for Advocates

- Talking to those who impact public health decisions and becoming your own advocate is a great way to spread the word. Educating others is one of the most influential steps someone can take. This can be done through conversations, emails, letter to the editor/local newspaper, or a simple letter to public health or legislative officials. Below is one example of a postcard [Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids](#) has available for free.



Get the conversation started with these talking points:

The Impact of Tobacco on our Community Health

- 10.7% of middle school students in 2023 reported ever using any type of tobacco product at least once (YTS, 2023).
- 23% of adults in South Dakota use cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, or e-cigarettes (BRFSS, 2023).
- In South Dakota, 14% of residents who have experienced depression use e-cigarettes (BRFSS, 2023).
- Smoking is responsible for 1,300 adult deaths annually in South Dakota (Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, 2025).
- Annual health care costs in South Dakota directly caused by smoking is \$433 million (Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, 2025).

The Environmental Consequences of Tobacco and Vaping

- Cigarette butts are the most littered item globally, leaking toxic chemicals into our soil and water (John Hopkins University, 2024).



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- Disposing of e-cigarettes (or vapes) must be done with caution due to liquid nicotine being toxic and the lithium batteries risk of starting fires requiring many to unknowingly dispose of these products at risk while also increasing risk to damage or fire to landfills, waste centers and property, and buildings (EPA, 2025).

The Role of Community in Preventing Youth Tobacco Use

- 15.2 % of South Dakota high schoolers surveyed in 2023 indicated they use tobacco (cigarette, smokeless tobacco, cigar, or e-cigarette). This is estimated to be 6,400 South Dakota high schoolers (YRBS, 2023).
- Preventing tobacco use among youth is crucial, as early initiation leads to long-term addiction (CDC, 2024).
- 1,500 youth under the age of 18 try cigarettes for the first time each year in South Dakota (Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, 2025).

Providing Support for those Ready to Quit

- Access to effective cessation programs, such as QuitLines, can increase a person’s chances of successfully quitting tobacco (CDC, 2025).
- The South Dakota QuitLine provides free cessation programs and quit resources to any South Dakotan 13 years or older (South Dakota QuitLine, 2026).
- The South Dakota QuitLine offers FREE services for South Dakota residents looking to quit tobacco/nicotine products. Available services include Phone Coaching, Hybrid Coaching (texting quit coaching), Kickstart Kits, and Downloadable Quit Guide (South Dakota QuitLine, 2026).

Advocating for a Tobacco-Free Future

- Commercial tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death in the United States (CDC, 2025).
- State and local organizations can strengthen tobacco prevention and control efforts by expanding access to and promoting cessation services, limiting access to tobacco products, and implementing smoke-free policies in workplaces, apartment buildings, and other shared spaces (CDC, 2025).
- 19,000 deaths every year in the United States can be attributed to secondhand tobacco smoke (American Lung Association, 2024).

Recognize a Tobacco-Free Business

Is a business in your community committed to being tobacco-free or promoting public health efforts? National Take Down Tobacco Day is the perfect opportunity to recognize and share their positive work with your entire community! Recognize community



partners and share the recognition with your local media. Here are a few ways you can do so:

Option 1: Social Media Spotlight

For your social media spotlight, focus on creating engaging posts that celebrate the business's commitment to being tobacco-free and promoting public health. Post ideas include:

- Image/Graphic: A photo of the business with a sign or banner celebrating their tobacco-free status, or a picture of their staff holding a certificate of recognition.
- Caption Example: "We're proud to recognize [Business Name] for their commitment to promoting to
- Hashtags: #TakeDownTobacco #TobaccoFree #HealthFirst #PublicHealth #CommunityChampions

Option 2: Press Release

A press release should provide all the important details about the business and its role in promoting tobacco-free efforts. Here's an outline and example to get started:

Press Release Example: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Business Name] Recognized for Commitment to Public Health and Tobacco-Free Efforts

[City, State] – [Date] – In celebration of National Take Down Tobacco Day, [Your Organization Name] is proud to recognize [Business Name] for its dedication to fostering a tobacco-free environment and supporting public health efforts. By maintaining a tobacco-free policy and promoting health and wellness, [Business Name] is setting a positive example for the community.

"We are thrilled to celebrate [Business Name] for its leadership in supporting public health," said [Your Name], [Position Title] at [Your Organization]. "Their commitment not only benefits their employees but also encourages customers to prioritize their health. It is businesses like these that help our community thrive."

[Business Name] has been a long-time partner in efforts to reduce tobacco use, offering resources to employees, educating customers on tobacco prevention, and making a significant contribution to the overall health of the community.

For more information, visit [Business Website] or contact [Contact Information].



Contact Information: [Your Organization name]
[Your Contact Name}
[Phone Number]
[Email Address]
[Website URL]

Option 3: Award or Certificate of Recognition

You can create a certificate or award to present to a business. A formal award presentation would help bring attention to their efforts but is not a requirement in doing this activity. Below is an example of what you could put on the certificate.

Certificate of Excellence in Public Health: Tobacco Prevention and Cessation

This certificate is awarded to [Business Name] in recognition of your outstanding commitment to promoting a tobacco-free environment and supporting public health initiatives. Your efforts contribute to a healthier, tobacco-free community. Thank you for your leadership and dedication to the well-being of your employees and customers.

Presented by [Organization Name] [Date]

Is someone in your community going above and beyond for their tobacco prevention and cessation efforts? Share it with us today! Please submit photos and recognitions to DOHTobaccoControl@state.sd.us.

