

Dakota Family Night focuses on dangerous vaping trend



On May 16, Dakota High School Student Assistance Specialist Stephanie Lange will host a Family Night Out at Dakota High School focused on the dangers of vaping and e-cigarettes. Photo courtesy of STEPHANIE LANGE

By Nicole Tuttle , For The Macomb Daily
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Dakota High School in Macomb Township will offer a Family Night Out on May 16 to discuss the dangers of vaping and e-cigarettes. Nicole Tuttle — For the Macomb Daily

Items that look like harmless school supplies to adults can actually be the paraphernalia of a dangerous new teen vaping and e-cigarette trend, according to those familiar with substance abuse prevention.

The topics of vaping and e-cigarettes will be the focus of Dakota High School's Family Night Out Monday in the Macomb Township school's atrium from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., said Stephanie Lange, the school's student assistance specialist.

"Things like Sharpie markers that look like school supplies can be used to dispense drugs. That is something most parents do not realize. It could be in a pencil box, a pipe," Lange said.

The speaker at the event will be Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) Public Health Coordinator Corey Beckwith. Beckwith will discuss vaping and e-cigarette trends as well as bring examples of paraphernalia used.

After Beckwith's 45-minute presentation, attendees will have an opportunity for a question and answer period as well. Parents and students will work together in group discussions during the evening.

Students from the Dakota Coalition Teen Council assist in selecting subjects for Family Night events.

"We look at teen trends and what is affecting their peers and select from there," Lange said. "Also, sometimes we can look at select MiPHY data to see what is alarming to us."

Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth is a student health survey offered by the Michigan Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. It provides student results on a variety of health risk behaviors including substance abuse for grades seven, nine and 11. Lange said school districts can obtain information by county and by district.

"We have the data from this year and it is disappointing. Part of the problem is the vaping thing is so new, this is the first year of collecting any data on it," Lange said.

Although the Chippewa Valley Coalition for Youth and Families hosted a meeting regarding e-cigarette use in February, Lange said bringing the subject to a Dakota High School Family Night Out would allow it to find a larger and more diverse audience.

"The audience is limited at coalition meetings and so the kids wanted more people to hear the message. We get a good following at our Family Night Out events," Lange said.

An important part of the message relates to consequences students can face if they attempt to vape or use e-cigarettes in school.

Lange said anyone under 18 who brings the items to school faces regular drug consequences.

E-cigarette and vaping products can explode if overheated, and despite myths to the contrary, can encourage regular cigarette use rather than discourage it, according to Lange.

Monday's Family Night is the fifth held at Dakota this year. The event is free and includes dining. Students must be accompanied by an adult. Lange and the Dakota Coalition Teen Council will serve as hosts. RSVP to slange@cvs.k12.mi.us or contact 586-723-2872 prior to May 13.