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New Jersey investigating how JUUL markets e-cigarettes

By Blake Nelson

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New Jersey is investigating how JUUL Labs sells and markets e-cigarettes, the state attorney general's office announced Tuesday.

Thirty-eight other states are also looking into the company, which is facing mounting pressure nationwide over its relationship with underage users.

"As a father myself, I am deeply troubled by the soaring popularity among young people of vaping products in general and of JUUL's products in particular," state Attorney General Gurbir Grewal said in a statement, adding that they will "ensure that any unlawful practices come to an end."

State Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli added that "E-cigarettes are not safe for anyone, especially our youth."

Multiple residents have already sued the company, including one Middlesex County teenager who said he became so addicted that he slept with the product. Federal lawmakers are also investigating.

The company blends nicotine with other chemicals into a small, USB drive-sized package, and it markets itself as an alternative to cigarettes. A spokesman said "we do not intend to attract underage users."

Austin Finan wrote in an email that the company would work with "attorneys general, regulators, public health officials, and other stakeholders to combat underage use and transition adult smokers from combustible cigarettes."

He added that JUUL has recently limited the sale of flavored options, stopped advertising on television, in print and elsewhere, and was spending \$1 billion to restructure, among other changes.

It's been illegal to sell any tobacco product to people under 21 since 2017, and Gov. Phil Murphy signed a law last month banning flavored vaping products for everyone.

The investigation comes on the heels of a sharp rise in teenagers' use of e-cigarettes, and the spread of a lung illness connected to e-cigarettes that's affected users nationwide, including New Jersey.