

Cony Key Club Educates 7th, 8th Grade

Summary

Augusta's Cony High School students saw the concerning amount of vaping among their peers, and called in Healthy Communities of the Capital Area (HCCA) to help do something about it. The students, members of Key Club, gathered 350 seventh and eighth grade students in the auditorium and shared e-cigarette facts and their own experiences concerning vaping.

Challenge

According to the 2019 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey, 29% of Maine high school students have used an electronic vaping device at least once in the past 30 days. This number is almost double survey reports of 15% in 2017. What's additionally troublesome is that nearly half of all Maine high school students surveyed have tried vaping at least once. Youth at Cony High School were concerned to see this increase in action.

Intervention

Cony High School Key Club members partnered with April Hughes at HCCA to host a seminar for the seventh and eighth grade students, using the Maine Center for Tobacco Independence E-Cigarette presentation and planning a panel discussion and Q&A based on their own experiences.

Results

Eight Key Club members divvied up the Youth-Facing E-Cigarette Presentation slides with HCCA tobacco staff members April Hughes and Elizabeth Deprey, each taking turns presenting to more than 350 seventh and eighth grade students in the Cony Auditorium. The younger students listened quietly, answered questions from the presenters and paid close attention to the real experiences shared by the Key Club members. Things got lively during the Q&A, demonstrating how engaged the younger students were by the presentation. The presenters fielded the questions well, answering "Why are we talking about this if middle school kids can't even buy vapes?" and "Have you ever tried a vape?" with calm, honest answers. The presentation ended to thunderous applause!

Cony Key Club Students present to middle school students with April Hughes and Elizabeth Deprey, DTPPs at HCCA.



"I think it's important for students of all ages to find things to connect through. The way we had the presentation set up, I didn't feel like we were being condescending or accusatory, which was important in order to get any sort of point across. Instead, we were authentically against the act of vaping. Going off script made it seem more realistic too, and not like we were just reading what we were told to say."

KRISTIN MERRILL, CONY KEY CLUB MEMBER



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