

Regulations, education help lower teen e-cigarette use

By Mike Anderson, KSL TV Oct 27th, 2017

OGDEN —

When it comes to e-cigarettes, keeping them out of the hands of teens can be difficult. A few years ago, an estimated 20 percent of teens in Weber and Morgan counties said they had at least tried e-cigarettes — battery-operated devices that deliver nicotine and flaring through clouds of water vapor.

The health department gets those numbers from surveys taken at area schools every two years. As the percentage of teens using e-cigarettes peaked in 2013, the department went to work on changing that trend. The Weber-Morgan area health department said regulations and awareness are being credited for helping bring those numbers down by 5 percent.

“They’re everywhere,” said Bryce Sherwood, health promotions supervisor with the Weber-Morgan Health Department. “You can’t go anywhere in any retail store and not find it ... At one point, we had 1 in 3 of our teenagers had experimented in the last 30 days with an e-cigarette. Being that we had the highest rates in the state, it was just mandatory that we look toward the health of the teenagers and what’s going on.”

A couple years ago, a local [regulation](#) was passed that impacted the manufacturing and retailers, he said.

“There were rumors of people manufacturing or making e-liquid in their bathtubs (and) selling it out of the back seat of their cars,” Sherwood said. While it’s hard to be certain, he believes local regulations are making a difference.

“We can’t say because of that regulation those numbers, that 5 percent dropped,” Sherwood said. “It definitely had an influence on it. That’s for sure.”

The department said education also contributed to the rate drop.

“We’ve educated parents. We’ve educated teenagers, and we’ve had a pretty comprehensive statewide approach to this, and I think that’s influenced those numbers as well,” Sherwood said.

[Sweeping FDA regulations take aim at e-cigarettes](#)

Tad Jensen has had better mornings. In front of him is the 499-page document he just printed — a copy of the Food and Drug Administration's long-awaited rules that bring e-cigarettes under federal oversight for the first time.

Retailers also play a role in the drop in students who used an e-cigarette. At Vape Affliction in Roy, president of business operations Eddie Mock said employees are vigilant.

“Anybody who enters our store with the intent to purchase is ID’d,” Mock said. If somebody comes in who is also with the person who’s purchasing, they get ID’d as well.”

Now estimated use among minors is down, but it's still high and there's still work to do. Mock said regulation or not, many retailers will continue to do their part.

"As an industry as a whole, we take it very seriously to not let kids have access," Mock said. "It's not for them. It's an adult product."