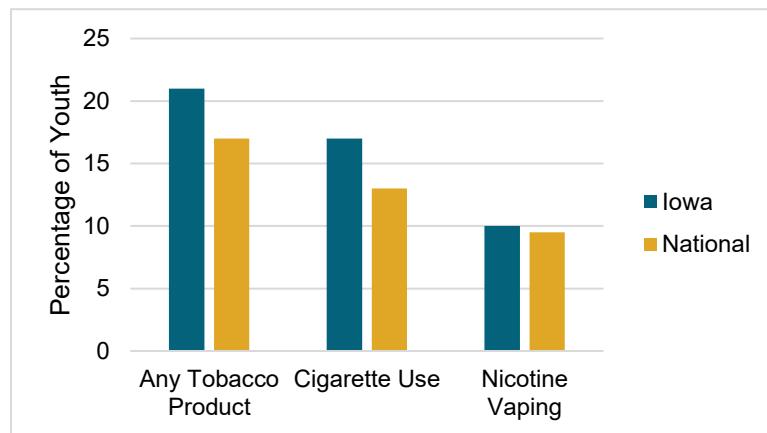


Iowa Youth Tobacco and Nicotine Use

This handout contains data from multiple sources to provide an overview of youth tobacco and nicotine use and perceptions across the State of Iowa.

- In the past month, **21%** of Iowan youth (aged 12-17) have used a tobacco product (cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, cigars or pipe tobacco) (**17%** nationally)¹.
- **17%** of Iowan youth report having smoked a cigarette within the past month (**13%** nationally)¹.
- **10%** of Iowan youth report nicotine vaping use in the past month (**9.5%** nationally)¹.



Perceived Risk from Tobacco and Nicotine Use

- In 2024, approximately **61%** of Iowan youth perceive great risk from smoking one or more pack of cigarettes a day (national **68%**)¹.
- **72%** of Iowan school administrators and staff consider vaping or e-cigarette use a problem in their schools².

Data Sources:

¹National Surveys on Drug Use and Health. 2023-2024 State Prevalence Tables. Data accessed on 1/12/2025.

²Iowa HHS, Division of Behavioral Health, FY24 School Vaping Survey.

Tobacco and Nicotine Use Prevention Efforts

To address tobacco and nicotine use among youth in Iowa, Iowa HHS has developed various prevention and early intervention strategies.

My Life, My Quit³ (MLMQ) is a free and confidential program that is designed to help youth quit usage of tobacco and nicotine products. MLMQ offers education on tobacco and nicotine use, coaching sessions on cessation, and other resources. This program is a tool that can help schools (especially administrators and school resource officers) navigate working with youth using these products, including Alternative to Suspension.

- Iowa has one of the **highest participation rates in our MLMQ program** compared to all the states who utilize MLMQ.

- **56 new individuals** (aged 11-17) enrolled in MLMQ in State Fiscal Year 2025 (SFY25).
- **91%** of those who enrolled indicated vaping or e-cigarette use.
- **48%** of those who enrolled indicated interest in quitting tobacco or nicotine use but needed further motivation to accomplish their goals.

Iowa Students for Tobacco Education and Prevention⁴



- (ISTEP) is a youth-led program (grades 7-12) made of young Iowans who want to stand up and speak out against tobacco and nicotine use among their peers.
- SFY25 ended with **62 active ISTEP chapters** across the State of Iowa throughout **22 Iowa**

counties with over **1,100 youth members**.

- The youth leadership **ISTEP Council** (grades 9-12) keeps the program truly youth-led. We currently have 18 active youth members across the state.
- In October 2025, Iowa HHS held its **annual ISTEP Summit⁵** where over **180 youth** from all over the state learned about behavioral health topics and resources. The Summit is completely youth-led by the youth ISTEP Council members.
 - **47%** of attendees reported this was their first time attending the Summit⁵.
 - **98%** of the attendees rated the Summit as “good” or “excellent”⁵.

Data Sources:

³Iowa HHS. My Life, My Quit Youth Report SFY25. Data accessed 1/9/2026.

⁴Iowa HHS. FY25 ISTEP Chapter Registration and Kit Tracking. Data accessed 1/12/2025.

⁵Iowa HHS. FY25 ISTEP Evaluation Survey. Data accessed 1/12/2025.

Future Steps

- Iowa HHS will continue to partner with local communities and organizations to spread awareness.
- Youth education and engagement through ISTEP and school-based programs strengthen protective factors and build resilience, supporting prevention of substance misuse and mental health disorders.