

Focus On High-Risk Nicotine Products

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Leana S. Wen's [July 16 op-ed](#) on nicotine pouches misrepresented both the state of youth tobacco use and the role that science-based alternatives can and should play in improving public health.

The [latest data](#) from the Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that youth use of nicotine pouches remains relatively low. Rates of [youth tobacco use overall](#), and specifically cigarette smoking — the [most harmful form](#) of nicotine consumption — are at historic lows.

Philip Morris International has a strict marketing code that its businesses must adhere to and that goes beyond what is required to help prevent youth access and appeal. PMI businesses employ robust age-verification systems such as [DoubleVerify](#) to help ensure that our digital advertising is directed only to legal-age consumers. Their advertising features only individuals ages 35 and over. All marketing efforts are focused only on legal-age nicotine consumers, who would otherwise continue using cigarettes or other traditional tobacco products.

It's right to scrutinize the risks of consuming nicotine, but we must also acknowledge what leading public health agencies have affirmed for years: It is [the burning of tobacco](#) that causes the vast majority of smoking-related diseases. Unfortunately, many people, including health care professionals, continue to conflate that with nicotine use in general. A recent study published in [Harm Reduction Journal](#) affirmed [previous research](#) showing that [most doctors believe](#) nicotine causes cancer. This misinformation hinders progress and leaves adult smokers without accurate guidance on switching to better, FDA-authorized alternatives.

We need to support a harm-reduction approach — one that recognizes that not all nicotine products carry the same risk. The goal should be to eliminate traditional cigarettes, not misinform.

The focus should be on helping the [nearly 29 million](#) American adults who still smoke find better alternatives — while continuing to enforce strong protections to keep all tobacco and nicotine products out of the hands of youths.

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