

Pushing back against tobacco marketing to youth

Language English

A new investigative report by Reuters has exposed how Philip Morris International has aggressively marketed their IQOS heated tobacco product on Instagram and other social media platforms, reaching millions of young people across the globe.

The report demonstrates Philip Morris' lack of sincerity when they promised to market IQOS only to existing smokers and not to youth and nonsmokers – a promise the US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) relied on when it recently authorised the sale of IQOS in the United States. Philip Morris International suspended its global social media influencer campaign in advance of the report.

"Many of the messages contained the hashtag "#IQOSambassador," tying them into a network of social media influencers that the international tobacco giant has relied on to brand the IQOS as a safer alternative to cigarettes and a sexy fashion accessory" says an article by [Reuters](#) [1].

During the same month, May 2019, the [Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids](#) [2] and other 125 public health organisations from 48 countries called on the tech companies Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat to revise their policies and immediately end the promotion of cigarettes, e-cigarettes and all other tobacco products on their platforms, including prohibiting the use of social media influencers for harmful products.

A [letter](#) [3] sent to the CEOs of the main social media channels describes how tobacco manufacturers, including Philip Morris International, British American Tobacco, Imperial Brands and Japan Tobacco International, have conducted social media marketing campaigns that have been viewed billions of times worldwide. These campaigns reach millions of young people and undermine efforts to reduce tobacco use and save lives.

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Related Link: [Reuters - Exclusive: Philip Morris suspends social media campaign after Reuters exposes young 'influencers'](#) [1]

[Letter to social media CEOs on the advertising of all tobacco products and e-cigarettes \(dated 17 May 2019\)](#) [6]

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[1] <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philipmorris-ecigs-instagram-exclusiv/exclusive-philip-morris-suspends-social-media-campaign-after-reuters-exposes-young-influencers-idUSKCN1SH02K>

[2] <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/health-groups-call-out-tobacco-and-e-cigarette-marketing-aimed-at-teens-on-social-media/>

[3] http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/content/press_office/2019/2019_05_21_socialmarketing.pdf

[4] <https://old.ncdalliance.org/taxonomy/term/37>

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[6] https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/content/press_office/2019/2019_05_21_socialmarketing.pdf