Truth Initiative – Commercial Tobacco Use Depictions in Streaming

Drafted January 12, 2022

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DATE**

**CONTACT NAME AND INFO**

**(ALLIANCE NAME): Smoking and commercial tobacco use still all too common on streaming shows**

*An estimated 27 million youth exposed to tobacco imagery in 2020*

**(CITY, WI) –** As streaming services like Netflix and Amazon Prime continue their takeover of home entertainment, a new study from the Truth Initiative shows that their top shows are also regularly exposing young people to commercial tobacco use

The Truth Initiative study found that 60% of young people’s top 15 favorite 2020 streaming and broadcast season releases featured smoking. Truth Initiative also analyzed top binge-watched shows among 15-24 year olds, finding that about two-thirds (64%) included commercial tobacco depictions, including “The Queen’s Gambit,” “The Umbrella Academy,” “Shameless,” and “On My Block.” This exposure to onscreen smoking is especially concerning because the 2012 Surgeon General’s report declared that exposure to onscreen smoking in movies causes young people to start smoking.

For the last two years, the National Association of Attorneys General (including Wisconsin’s Josh Kaul) sent letters to major U.S. streaming services and creative guilds urging these organizations to decrease instances of commercial tobacco use in their programming. Despite making a pledge to limit commercial tobacco depictions in its offerings appealing to youth, Netflix remains the worst offender four years in a row based on its new 2020 season releases and popular binge-worthy shows.

“We know that when young people see smoking in the movies and TV they watch, it helps normalize the behavior for them,” said **(CONTACT NAME)**. With the amount of time teens spend watching streaming services, it’s definitely worrying that the top shows amongst youth continue to regularly feature smoking and commercial tobacco use.”

Truth found that one top show, “The Umbrella Academy”, increased instances of commercial tobacco use by 60% in its newest season, with it featured in every episode. Another hit Netflix show, “The Queen’s Gambit” showed characters using commercial tobacco products in every episode, often reinforcing the misconception that smoking relieves stress, when nicotine can actually increase feelings of anxiety and depression.

“This continued exposure to smoking and commercial tobacco use on the shows most watched by teens is unacceptable,” continued **(CONTACT NAME)**. We’ve made progress in reducing youth smoking over the years, but this trend puts those gains at risk.”

Visit the **(ALLIANCE NAME) WEBSITE/URL** to learn about tobacco prevention efforts in **(COMMUNITY/COUNTY)**. Young people that want to quit vaping can text “VAPEFREE” to 873373 for free help to quit. Adults who smoke or use other commercial tobacco products can also call 1-800-QUIT NOW to receive free quitting assistance.

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