



## **COVID-19 WON'T STOP THE MISSION OF THE DAP**

People who smoke, vape, or have a history of substance use disorders may be at higher risk of COVID-19 infection and complications, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

"As people across the U.S. and the rest of the world contend with corona virus disease, our friends at the DEA advised us that we should be alert to the possibility that it could hit some populations with substance use disorders particularly hard," advised Kent Gade, National Director of the Drug Awareness Program.

"This virus has certainly changed the way we need to deliver our message, but it hasn't changed that message or our mission. Since this virus attacks the lungs, people (especially young individuals) who smoke or vape tobacco or marijuana are at a high risk from COVID-19, which is the respiratory disease caused by the virus", he added.

While we have heard from the very beginning that the virus attacks an older population with underlying health issues, it only makes sense that smokers and vapors compromise our lungs. Thus, the work of the Drug Awareness Program cannot relax during this crisis. We just need to find ways to get the message out to the families and children we serve that we still need to make Smart Choices. Our messages before the virus ring truer now.

The DAP Directors are constantly in contact with State Chairman, who have been charged with keeping in touch with Lodge chairs. Our Lodges may be shuttered for the time being and our children may be home from school, but the message still needs to be reinforced.

Lodge ER's are reminded to encourage members' families to seek out information at our various websites: [www.elkskizone.org](http://www.elkskizone.org) and [www.elks.org](http://www.elks.org) for up-to-date information. The DAP is also designing in-home and on-line programs for kids while they are out of school and more information will be provided as this program is rolled out.

"In the meantime, we need to heed the recommendations from the CDC. Practicing Social Distancing does not mean we abandon good social practices. When the opportunity presents itself, thank a police officer, a fireman, a first responder, a grocer, a nurse, a doctor or any essential worker in your community. We will come through this together and when we do, we will be stronger and better and more informed than ever before", said Director Gade. He added that hopefully by the time you read this, we will be headed back to normal, however we must remain vigilant and our mission will not change or waiver.

Sincerely:

Frank Burr

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