

April 19, 2019

To: Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing & General Affairs  
From: Rebecca Ryan, Division Director, Health Promotion  
Subj: H.26: An Act Related to restricting retail and internet sales of electronic cigarettes, liquid nicotine, and tobacco paraphernalia in Vermont

On behalf of the American Lung Association in Vermont, I am writing in support of H.26. Our mission is to save lives by preventing lung disease and improving lung health. We support the three most effective ways to reduce tobacco use, including 1) a comprehensive, well-funded tobacco control program, 2) strong clean air laws, and 3) high tobacco taxes. We also support raising the age of tobacco sales to 21. To reduce youth access, we believe that electronic cigarettes should be treated like other tobacco products and that includes limiting retail sales to licensed wholesale dealers only and banning internet and mail order sales in Vermont.

### Electronic Cigarettes and Youth – A Public Health Epidemic

- Among high school students, current e-cigarette use increased from 1.5% (220,000 students) in 2011 to 20.8% (3.05 million students) in 2018. From 2017–2018 alone, current e-cigarette use increased by 78%.<sup>1</sup>
- The unprecedented spike in youth e-cigarette use prompted the U.S. Surgeon General to issue an advisory Dec. 18, 2018 urging aggressive steps to combat youth e-cigarette use<sup>2</sup>.
- Vermont is no different. While there has been a 50% decrease in the cigarette smoking rate of Vermont students since 2007, nearly 25% of students now use some form of tobacco, including electronic cigarettes. Source: 2017 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- Among current e-cigarette users in Vermont under age 18, about half borrowed or got e-cigarettes from someone who was over age 18. Nearly one in five bought them either online or in a store. Source: 2017 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- The U.S. Surgeon General has concluded that e-cigarette use among youths and young adults is of public health concern; exposure to nicotine during adolescence can cause addiction and can harm the developing adolescent brain<sup>3</sup>. A single JUUL pod contains as

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<sup>1</sup> CDC, Notes from the Field: Use of Electronic Cigarettes and Any Tobacco Product Among Middle and High School Students — United States, 2011–2018; November 16, 2018 / 67(45);1276–1277. [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6745a5.htm?s\\_cid=mm6745a5\\_w](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6745a5.htm?s_cid=mm6745a5_w)

<sup>2</sup> US Department of Health and Human Services. Media Advisory, December 18, 2018. <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2018/12/18/surgeon-general-releases-advisory-e-cigarette-epidemic-among-youth.html>

<sup>3</sup> US Department of Health and Human Services. E-cigarette use among youth and young adults: a report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health; 2016. [https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/2016\\_SGR\\_Full\\_Report\\_non-508.pdf](https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/2016_SGR_Full_Report_non-508.pdf)

much nicotine as a pack of cigarettes and cost a fraction of the price.

- E-cigarette aerosol is not harmless water vapor. The Surgeon General concluded that secondhand emissions contain, "nicotine; ultrafine particles; flavorings such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to serious lung disease; volatile organic compounds such as benzene, which is found in car exhaust; and heavy metals, such as nickel, tin, and lead<sup>4</sup>.

The American Lung Association in Vermont urges you to pass H.26 to help to reduce youth access of electronic cigarettes in the same way Vermont does for other tobacco products. Thank you. For more information, contact Rebecca Ryan, [rebecca.ryan@lung.org](mailto:rebecca.ryan@lung.org) or 876-8682.

For more information about electronic cigarettes, visit the American Lung Association's website at [www.Lung.org/ecigs](http://www.Lung.org/ecigs) or at the links below:

- [American Lung Association's Statement on E-Cigarettes](#)
- [The Impact of E-cigarettes on the Lung](#)
- [E-cigarettes, Vapes and JUULs: What Parents Should Know](#)
- [E-cigarettes, Vapes and JUULs: What Teens Should Know](#)
- [E-cigarettes, Vapes and JUULs: What Schools Should Know](#)
- [Additional Resources on E-Cigarettes](#)

The Price of Cool: A Teenager, a Juul and Nicotine Addiction:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/16/health/vaping-juul-teens-addiction-nicotine.html>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid

