



Public Health
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Public Health Advisory Council

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February 23, 2015

David Madore, Chair
Clark County Board of Health
P. O. Box 5000
Vancouver, WA 98666-5000

Dear Councilor Madore:

We are writing to express our support for pending Washington legislation that would protect minors from electronic cigarettes and other vaping devices. As you know, electronic cigarettes (commonly known as e-cigarettes) and vaping devices are battery-operated devices designed to be used in the same manner as conventional cigarettes. There are over 400 brands of vaping devices. Liquid in the cartridges usually contains nicotine and comes in over 7,000 flavors. Besides nicotine, youth can use e-cigarettes to vape other substances such as THC (the main active ingredient in marijuana) and virtually any other psychoactive drug.

Manufacturers and retailers have made unproven health claims about their products, asserting that they are safe or safer than traditional cigarettes. In addition, manufacturers deny marketing these devices to minors, even though many of the products contain fruit, cotton candy, chocolate, gummy bear, buttered popcorn and other flavors attractive to children, and even though the products frequently feature brightly colored labels and cartoonish graphics. Last year, the Washington Poison Center received 182 calls related to exposure to vaping liquid, 82% in children 1-3 years in age.

Two years ago, based on concerns that manufacturers were marketing these devices to children, the Clark County Board of Health passed an ordinance banning the sale of e-cigarettes to minors. Until now, however, there has been no statewide ban on sales to minors. Not surprisingly, Washington youth are using these devices at alarming rates. Healthy Youth Survey preliminary data reveal that 8th graders, 18% of 10th graders and 23% of 12th graders reported using these devices in the 30 days before participating in the survey.

Fortunately, two bills in the legislature (HB 1645, sponsored by Representative Harris, and a companion bill, SB 5573, sponsored by Senator Rivers,) would protect youth from these devices. If passed, the legislation would prohibit the use of vapor products on school property, prohibit (statewide) the sale of vapor products to children under 18, prohibit the sale of flavored vapor products, prohibit the sale of

vapor products containing substances that increase the absorption of nicotine or other psychoactive chemicals, and prohibit possession of these devices by minors. In addition, the law would tax vapor products with a portion of the proceeds going to public health essential services.

Based on the foregoing considerations the Public Health Advisory Council recommends that the Clark County Board of Health express its support for House Bill 1645 and Senate Bill 5573.

Sincerely,



Trevor Evers
Chair, Clark County Public Health Advisory Council

