



News Release

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State Board of Health passes emergency ban on flavored vapor products

OLYMPIA – Today the Washington State Board of Health passed an emergency rule banning the sale of flavored vapor products or any products that will be used to create a flavored vapor product. The rule takes effect on October 10, 2019 and lasts for 120 days. The Board of Health and Department of Health will work closely with the Liquor and Cannabis Board on plans for implementation and enforcement now that the emergency rule is final.

“This is a critical part of our response to the youth vaping epidemic and the outbreak of vaping associated lung injury in Washington and throughout the country,” said Secretary of Health John Wiesman, who is also a member of the board. “While we don’t yet know the exact cause of the lung injury, we know these products are not safe and we must act quickly to protect young people.”

Earlier this month, Governor Jay Inslee signed an [executive order](#) directing the department to ask the board to adopt this emergency rule and take other actions to address the outbreak of [vaping associated lung injury](#). There are currently seven cases in Washington and over 1000 nationwide. The outbreak is concentrated in young people. Nationally, the median age of patients is 23. Five of the seven Washington patients are between 10 and 29 years old.

“We know from our [health impact review of House Bill 1932](#) that flavors get adolescents and young adults to start vaping and smoking, and the health effects of added flavors in marijuana vapor products have not been well researched,” said Keith Grellner, chair of the State Board of Health. “Eliminating flavors from these products is an important first step to better protecting the health of people in Washington, especially to prevent and discourage youth and young adults from starting or continuing to vape unknown, unspecified, untested and unverified chemicals.”

In addition to the emergency rule, the department is investigating the outbreak, taking steps to warn consumers of the risks of vaping, asking health care providers to report all suspected cases

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and expanding educational campaigns to raise awareness of the hazards of vaping, including an emphasis on the high risk of buying and using products from the illegal market.

The healthiest option is to not smoke or vape. Regardless of the ongoing investigation, if you don't use e-cigarettes or vapor products, you should not start doing so, and youth, young adults and pregnant or breastfeeding women should never use them.

Adults who use e-cigarettes, vapor products or other tobacco products and are attempting to quit should use evidence-based treatments, including counseling and FDA-approved medications. Resources are available at www.doh.wa.gov/quit. For those trying to quit marijuana, resources for quitting are available at www.warecoveryhelpline.org.

The [DOH website](#) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. [Find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#). Sign up for the DOH blog, [Public Health Connection](#).

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