**E-cigarette Talking Points**

**General**

The risks posed by e-cigarettes are not fully understood, but we do know that smokeless does not mean harmless.

Preliminary testing of e-cigarettes has identified chemicals known to cause cancer and birth defects in first and secondhand e-cigarette vapor. However, e-cigarettes remain under-studied and un-regulated.

Because e-cigarettes are unregulated, two e-cigarettes produced on the same line can be dramatically different. Manufacturers can make, market and sell their e-cigarettes without transparency or consistency.

Most e-cigarettes currently are being manufactured overseas where manufacturing and safety standards may differ; making it more difficult to know what is in e-cigarettes without regulation.

The lack of clinical studies on the potential health risks and the way these products are marketed without appropriate health warnings, instructions of use, or legal age restrictions is cause for serious concern.

Many public health professionals are concerned that e-cigarettes may:

* Have an adverse impact on users' health,
* Encourage smoking initiation,
* Perpetuate the use of nicotine and tobacco products among tobacco users who might otherwise quit, and even those who have quit
* Counter the effectiveness of smoke-free policies

**Nicotine**

We do know that different brands of e-cigarettes contain varying amounts of nicotine which impacts the cardiovascular system and is the primary addictive drug in all tobacco products.

E-cigarettes enable consumers to continue their tobacco addiction by delivering the drug through a different device.

E-cigarette advocates have promoted these products as smoking cessation tools, although little evidence exists that they are effective cessation aids. In contrast, there are 7 FDA-approved medications that are tested and regulated, and a toll-free quitline (800-QUIT NOW) that tobacco users can use to improve their chance of successfully quitting.

**Carcinogens and Toxins**

E-cigarette proponents argue that the vapor produced by e cigarettes is nothing more than water vapor. There is a lack of scientific data to support this argument while there is evidence that the vapor contains carcinogens and other toxic chemicals.

The FDA has analyzed samples of e-cigarettes and found known carcinogens, and detectable levels of other toxic chemicals.[[1]](#footnote-1)The FDA analysis of the two leading brands of e-cigarettes found nitrosamines and the antifreeze ingredient diethylene glycol. In September 2010, FDA issued a number of [warning letters](http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/2010/ucm225224.htm) to electronic cigarette distributors for various violations of the [Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act](http://www.fda.gov/RegulatoryInformation/Legislation/FederalFoodDrugandCosmeticActFDCAct/ucm2005640.htm) including “violations of good manufacturing practices, making unsubstantiated drug claims, and using the devices as delivery mechanisms for active pharmaceutical ingredients.”

More recent studies have tested mainstream e-cigarette brands and found chemicals known to cause cancer and birth defects. Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education at University of California San Francisco analyzed recent studies and concluded Benzene, Cadmium, Isoprene, Lead, Nickel, Formaldehyde, Acetaldehyde, and Toluene are present in many brands of e-cigarettes.[[2]](#footnote-2)

A risk associated with e-cigarettes is that children may consume e-cigarette solutions, which are not manufactured in child safe protection containers and can contain fatal doses of nicotine and harmful chemicals.[[3]](#footnote-3) E-cigarettes are advertised in kid-friendly flavors, such as strawberry, chocolate and mint, and in packaging and smaller sizes that appeal to young people. Since 2011, the Oregon Poison Control Center has responded to 12 calls regarding unintentional nicotine poisoning in children that consumed e-cigarette solutions. Five of these cases included visits to the emergency room.

**Prevalence**

The use of e-cigarettes by teens and adults is on the rise, creating new addictions to nicotine among Oregon’s youth, deepening the addiction for current smokers, and renewing addiction for former smokers.

* CDC data shows that e-cigarette use doubled among U.S. middle and high school students during 2011-2012.
* 1 in 5 youth trying e-cigarettes are not conventional cigarette smokers and are becoming addicted to nicotine through e-cigarettes.
* According to the survey by the CDC, the number of Americans who used e cigarettes quadrupled from 2009 to 2010.
* According to the Legacy Foundation, 7.2% of quit smokers returned to nicotine addiction via e-cigarettes in 2012.

**Predatory Marketing**

The greatest danger of the harm reduction/nicotine maintenance strategy lies in the marketing of these products. The unfettered promotion of nicotine maintenance products has the potential to foster the norm that addiction to nicotine is acceptable, and is of little health consequence to the user or the population as a whole.

The growing and unregulated e-cigarette market has attracted the attention of The Big Three (Reynolds American, Lorillard, Phillip Morris/Altria), who have recently invested in e-cigarette products and put significant dollars into marketing them.

Through e-cigarettes, Big Tobacco is again marketing on TV after more than 40 years. They are also spending large sums on print advertising, which has declined since the Master Settlement Agreement in 1998.

* Spending on e-cigarette commercials climbed 17.9% from 2011 to 2012.[[4]](#footnote-4)
* Print ad spending among e-cigarette marketers increased 71.9% in 2012.

The marketing of e-cigarettes in magazines and on television—where cigarette ads have been banned since 1971—could undermine decades of efforts to deglamorize smoking.

* Youth and young adults who see e-cigarettes being used on TV may perceive and associate it with regular smoking.
* TV and print ads for e-cigarettes are already using themes and images historically used to market regular cigarettes, including celebrity endorsements and portrayals of e-cigarette use as rebellious, fashionable and fun.

E-cigarettes may be particularly appealing to young adults due to:

* high-tech design
* wide array of available flavors, including candy-and fruit-flavored cartridges
* easy availability online and in shopping malls[[5]](#footnote-5)
* decrease in price in recent years

**Policy**

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has the authority to regulate e-cigarettes as tobacco products, but has yet to do so. In the absence of Federal regulation, several local health boards, universities, businesses, and state government have taken steps to protect Oregonians from e-cigarettes.

* In 2012, Governor Kitzhaber signed the Tobacco-Free Campus Executive Order prohibiting the use of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, in state agency buildings and on state agency grounds.
* The University of Oregon included e-cigarettes as part of their recent tobacco-free campus policy.
* Lane Transit Authority does not allow riders to use e-cigarettes on buses.
* Fred Meyer has included electronic cigarettes as part of their no smoking policy. They don’t allow electronic cigarette use in their stores or where smoking is prohibited by state law.
* Starbucks included e-cigarettes as part of their tobacco free worksite policy.

1. In 2009, the FDA released an analysis of 18 electronic cigarettes and found that half of the vapor samples “contained carcinogens, and that [one contained diethylene glycol](http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/PublicHealthFocus/ucm173146.htm), a toxic chemical used in antifreeze.” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/early/2013/03/05/tobaccocontrol-2012-050859.abstract>

   <http://www.tobacco.ucsf.edu/10-chemicals-identified-so-far-e-cig-vapor-are-california-prop-65-list-carcinogens-and-reproductive> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. http://adage.com/article/media/watch-reynolds-american-s-e-cig-commercial/243856/ [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. American Legacy Foundation. (2009). *Electronic Cigarettes (“E-cigarettes”).* [*http://www.legacyforhealth.org/PDFPublications/ECIGARETTE\_0909\_temp.pdf*](http://www.legacyforhealth.org/PDFPublications/ECIGARETTE_0909_temp.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)