



Oregon Pediatric Society

A Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Incorporated in Oregon

DATE: February 18, 2020

TO: The Honorable Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson, Chair
Senate Committee on Health Care

FROM: William J. Byrne, M.D.
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Member of the Oregon Pediatric Society Advocacy Committee

SUBJECT: HB 4078 Ban on Online Vaping Products

The Oregon Pediatric Society is the state chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Our membership is committed to preserving the health and well-being of all children in Oregon. For the record, I am pediatrician Dr. Bill Byrne, and I am urging your committee to support House Bill 4078, which prohibits the online and remote sales of vaping products.

Our old “friends” Big Tobacco are at it again, looking for new markets. Four of the six largest vaping companies are controlled by R.J. Reynolds, Phillip Morris, and the Japan Tobacco International. Their marketing strategies with designer flavoring and colorful packaging clearly target the teenage and young adult populations. The online 2019 “flavors of the year” include Strawberry Watermelon POP, Sunrise Pressed e-juice, Meteor Milk Space Jam, Pink Lemonade Risky, Sky Aeris, the Voyage Coastal Clouds, and Carnival Cali. These are just a few of the more than one hundred “cool options” available on the internet. All you have to do to purchase these products is click on a box that asks if you are 21, provide a credit card number, and an address. That’s it. Has the marketing campaign been successful? In 2018 more than 20% of high school students and 5% of middle schoolers report having used vaping products. To take it a step further, adolescent users of e-cigarettes are 3.6 time more likely to become users of tobacco products than non-users. This attempt by Big Tobacco to garner new users of vaping and tobacco products by targeting younger generations became so obvious that in October 2019, the Federal Trade Commission launched an investigation into their business and marketing strategies.

Vaping products are not safe and may provide more nicotine in one use than an entire pack of cigarettes. The contents of these products have never been subject to testing or approval by the FDA. The 2019 pneumonia epidemic from e-cigarette or vaping product use (EVALI) resulted in the hospitalization of 2,668 patients. Fifty-two percent were under the age of 24 and 1/3 of these were under the age of 18. Sixty died including two here in Oregon. Vitamin E acetate, not known to be in the product, was implicated as the likely but not only causative agent. The epidemic of EVALI was a warning. The long-term effects of these products are completely unknown, but the message is clear: these products are not harmless water vapor and should not be considered safe.

The corporate vaping business plan is clear, to recruit a new generation to nicotine addiction. Let’s make it more difficult for our teenagers to obtain these potentially toxic products by banning their online sale. Please join me and the Oregon Pediatric Society in supporting House Bill 4078.