

Multnomah County



Board of Health

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Sept. 24, 2019

Multnomah County Board of Health Advisory

The Multnomah County Board of Health urges users of vaping devices and e-cigarettes to stop vaping, and directs Health Department to make recommendations for broader prevention and enforcement

As of Sept. 19, 2019, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have reported 530 cases of vaping-related lung disease from 38 states and one territory, including seven deaths. In Oregon, there have been four cases, including one death. All the people affected have reported vaping, and many have reported vaping cannabis products, including THC and CBD oils. However, no single product or additive has been associated with these illnesses, and both nicotine and cannabis products have been involved.

This is not the only health crisis created by the booming e-cigarette industry. Kids are attracted to the flavors of vaping liquids — as they are attracted to flavored cigarillos and menthol cigarettes — and it puts them at risk of disease and addiction.

The [Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#) has proposed pulling flavored e-cigarettes and nicotine pods from the market. The Multnomah County Board of Health calls on the agency to act swiftly.

In Multnomah County, youth vaping is increasing at an alarming rate, mirroring state and national trends. According to the Oregon Healthy Teens Survey, e-cigarette use among eleventh graders increased in Multnomah County, from one in 25 eleventh graders in 2013 to nearly one in six by 2015.

Data published this month by the [National Institutes of Health](#) indicate rates could be even higher — nationally one in four high school seniors report they have vaped nicotine in the past month.

Flavored tobacco and e-cigarette products are sweet, cheap, and easily accessible. Youth who use these candy and fruit-flavored products become addicted to the nicotine, putting them at increased risk for tobacco and vape-related illness and disease. The FDA is already scrutinizing manufacturers' e-cigarette marketing strategies, particularly those targeting youth.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners, acting in their capacity as the Board of Health, is taking these three immediate measures to address youth consumption of nicotine:

1. We will work with the state and federal government to ban the sale of flavored nicotine products.
2. We warn people who vape that these products may be harmful, and we urge users to stop vaping immediately. Individuals or parents who suspect that they or their loved ones may be suffering from a vaping-related injury or illness should contact a health care provider immediately.
3. We direct the Health Department to return to the Board of Health with a proposal to prohibit the sale of all flavored tobacco products in Multnomah County.

The Multnomah County Board of Health has taken repeated action to limit youth access to tobacco and nicotine products by establishing the legal sales age for e-cigarettes, licensing tobacco retailers and lobbying for a state tax on vaping products.

The Board will continue to work with Multnomah County's Community Health Center system of clinics to support current tobacco cessation activities that meet or exceed statewide standards.

Anyone ready to quit tobacco is encouraged to contact their primary care provider or the Oregon Tobacco Quit Line at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or online at www.quitnow.net/oregon. The Quit Line is a free telephone and web-based counseling service to help Oregonians quit using tobacco and nicotine products.

The tobacco and e-cigarette industry is constantly evolving. Our laws and support systems must also evolve to protect our community from the harm of tobacco and nicotine products, and from industry tactics designed to create new young nicotine addicts.

