Arkansas Department of Health

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ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Position Statement on E-Cigarettes

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) warned the public of the health risk posed by e-cigarettes after they announced, in July 2009, that laboratory analysis of electronic cigarette samples found e-cigarettes contain carcinogens and other toxic chemicals such as diethylene glycol, an ingredient used in antifreeze.

Electronic cigarettes, also called "e-cigarettes," are battery-operated devices that generally contain cartridges filled with nicotine, flavor and other chemicals. The electronic cigarette turns nicotine, which is highly addictive, and other chemicals into a vapor that is inhaled by the user.

These products are marketed and sold to young people and are readily available online and in shopping malls. They are also available in different flavors, such as chocolate, strawberry, mint, bubble gum, peaches and cream which may appeal to young people. Since they do not produce smoke, but a vapor, they are being used in areas where smoking is prohibited. In addition, these products do not contain any health warnings comparable to FDA-approved nicotine replacement products or conventional cigarettes.

The FDA has warned that e-cig use poses "acute health risks," that "the danger posed by their toxic chemicals…cannot seriously be questioned," and that they have caused a wide variety of potentially serious symptoms "including racing pulse, dizziness, slurred speech, mouth ulcers, heartburn, coughing, diarrhea, and sore throat."

Public health experts expressed concern that the marketing of products such as electronic cigarettes could increase nicotine addiction and tobacco use in young people and may lead kids to try other tobacco products. Jonathan Winickoff, M.D., chair of the American Academy of Pediatrics Tobacco Consortium and Jonathan Samet, M.D., director of the Institute for Global Health at the University of Southern California, joined Joshua Sharfstein, M.D., principal deputy commissioner of the FDA, and Matthew McKenna, M.D., former director of the Office of Smoking and Health for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to discuss the potential risks associated with the use of electronic cigarettes.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued, on September 9, 2010, warning letters to five electronic cigarette distributors for various violations of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FDCA) including unsubstantiated claims and poor manufacturing practices. The FDA said the agency intends to regulate electronic cigarette and related products in a manner consistent with its mission of protecting the public health. The letter outlines the regulatory pathway for marketing drug products in compliance with the FDCA.

E-cigarettes use has been banned in no-smoking areas in New Jersey, Virginia, and Suffolk County, NY. Several other states and countries, including a few attorneys general are pushing to ban or restrict their sale to children.

ADH Position Statement on E-Cigarettes

The Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) is committed to disease prevention and control. Since neither the ADH nor the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) can insure the safety of the e-cigarettes because of carcinogens and other toxic chemicals, and considering that e-cigarettes manufactures have no evidence to support claims that the products are safe, ADH opposes the sale of these products without FDA approval to assure safety, efficacy, and ingredient purity, with limits on sale to children, protection against unfounded claims made by promoters and their use in public places where others are forced to inhale e-cigarettes vapor which contains nicotine and other toxic chemicals.

For more information from FDA and e-cigarettes, follow the link below:
http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/PublicHealthFocus/ucm172906.htm

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