

MEDIA RELEASE

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Emergency Rules Passed to Address Lung Injury Associated with Vaping

On October 10, the Washington State Board of Health passed emergency rules to respond to lung injury associated with vaping. The emergency rules will be in effect for 120 days. The emergency rules implement three key points – requiring health care providers to report confirmed or probable cases of lung injury associated with vaping, warning signs in retail shops selling vape products, and the ban of all flavored vape products.

According to Washington State Secretary of Health John Wiesman, the flavor ban “is to immediately decrease the attractiveness of vaping to youth to reduce the risk for lung injury.”

Twenty-six percent of Kittitas County 10th graders report using a vapor product in the last 30 days, which is higher than the state average. Vaping is an emerging health issue and is being used at three times the rate of other products with nicotine, such as cigarettes or spit tobacco.

“Tobacco continues to be the leading cause of death in Washington State,” asserts Kittitas County Health Officer Dr. Mark Larson. “Tobacco and vaping products are targeted at kids. In 2009 flavored cigarettes were banned, but vaping products are now targeting our children in the same way only ten years later. The average adult is not as enticed to vape berry blast. In any form, nicotine is addictive and we continue to use education, policies, and laws to keep youth from starting to use tobacco or nicotine.”

According to the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) the chemical or devices causing the current outbreak of lung injury is unknown. For more information about the investigation, visit <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/VapingAssociatedLungInjury>.

“Prevention efforts are ongoing in our state, including the Tobacco 21 legislation that will go into effect January 2020,” states Administrator Tristen Lamb. “Our department’s mission is to protect and promote the health of the people of Kittitas County. The new vaping rules support that mission by protecting our youth from products designed specifically to start them young and keep them hooked for life.”

For more information or questions please visit sites such as DOH at www.doh.wa.gov or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at www.cdc.gov. For anyone wanting help to quit please call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit www.doh.wa.gov/quit.

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