

January 17, 2017



Dear School Nurse,

I write to you in my capacity as chair of the Tobacco Free NH network (TFNH). This is a network of local, state, and national organizations and others committed to eliminating the STILL #1 cause of premature death and disability in NH and the USA. Tobacco related disease killed 1900 people in NH in 2015 (compared to < 500 from opioids but see relation below). We work to do this through raising awareness and education.

Today we share with you the latest information about ENDS = electronic nicotine delivery systems, also called e-cigarettes, vapes, and others. There are 100's of these devices on the market.

We have two major concerns:

1. the 2015 YRBS (Youth Risk Behavior Survey)/CDC (Centers for Disease Control) data show that NH teens, grades 9-12, use ENDS at a much higher rate than traditional cigarettes;  $\geq 25\%$  vs  $< 10\%$  (use in last 30 days prior to survey, so yes, we've done a great job with "traditional"/combustible cigarettes),
2. for those with still developing brains, teens and even up until age 25, ENDS are dangerous.

On December 8, 2016 the Surgeon General report concluded that these products contain nicotine, nearly 100% of it derived from tobacco. Nicotine has been shown to be a gateway drug; affecting the developing brain, hard-wiring it to be susceptible to other addicting substances, including opiates and alcohol. The latter fact is old but supported by robust data and vetted yet again.

**THIS IS BAD!!**

Since 2010, it has been illegal (RSA 126 K) for NH youth under 18 year of age to buy and/or use ENDS. ENDS are also included in the indoor clean air act (Indoor Smoking Act, RSA 155:64-77), making it illegal to use them in all the same places as combustible (tobacco) cigarettes.

I ask that you forward this information to your principal, assistant principal, and/or whoever oversees the implementation of the school rules related to tobacco/substance use, so they can better understand this critical health issue our students are facing.

Superb resources for all - kids, teachers, parents, health care providers - are available at <https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/> and the NH Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program at <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/tobacco/>.

TFNH hopes you find this information helpful.

Thank you for your time. Best wishes for a successful rest of the school year.

Sincerely,

Albee Budnitz, MD, FACP, FCCP