



RE: Lung Illnesses Caused by Vaping and Flavor Bans

Indiana Smoke-Free Alliance represents a trade group of concerned business men and women that manufacture, distribute and or sell vapor related products. We bring together the industry side of vaping to protect members with public affairs efforts at the state and national levels, while also working with city and county councils when issues arise at the local level. Most notably, we worked with the Indiana General Assembly in the 2017 session to enact SEA 1, which established common-sense regulations of the e-liquid industry while allowing for a thriving marketplace.

Indiana Smoke-Free Alliance strongly encourages all media outlets to refer to the statement made by the FDA which fully understands the dangers posed by illicit products and THC products. In the same vein, ISFA strongly urges public officials to thoroughly investigate the circumstances which might have led to each reported hospitalization before making statements to the public as to whether certain products are implicated in these incidents.

The vapor industry is heavily regulated by the Food and Drug Administration as well as the laws that were created in 2017 by the Indiana General Assembly in SEA-1. FDA has imposed regulatory requirements on nicotine-containing vapor products for more than three years, since August 8, 2016, including strict labeling and packaging restrictions that require vapor companies to, among other requirements, disclose all of the ingredients in the products sold. In stark contrast, none of the products designed for THC, cannabis and any other non-nicotine substances are regulated by the FDA.

Vaping related lung illnesses

Recent reports increasingly indicate that these adverse events are linked to illicit substances such as THC and cannabis, not e-cigarettes. The leading culprit in these incidents seems to be Vitamin E- which should NEVER be inhaled, Vitamin E is being used illegally as an emulsifier and filler in these THC vaping products. These lung illnesses seem to be exclusive to the United States; there isn't a worldwide outbreak of disease caused by vaping. The issues with THC vapor products should not be confused with nicotine vapor products. Acute vaping related lung illnesses are directly related to the illegal sale and tampering of THC vapor products. This isn't a retail or manufacturer problem with e-cigarettes, this is a black-market problem with THC vaping products. These tainted products do NOT come from the legitimate retailers and manufactures of Indiana Smoke-Free Alliance who have sold nicotine vapor products for years. Indiana has the only e-liquid manufacturing law in the United States which subject legitimate vapor products to strict standards regarding both Indiana law and the FDA.

The FDA released the following statements concerning lung related illnesses:

- “Federal and state partners are following any potential leads, including the presence of Vitamin E acetate found in many of the samples containing THC.”
- “However, in the interim, we encourage consumers to help protect themselves and avoid buying vaping products of any kind on the street, and to refrain from using THC oil or modifying/adding any substances to products purchased in stores.”

ISFA's position

CBD products are legal in the state of Indiana and ISFA members adhere to the sale and distribution of legal CBD products, we do not condone the adulteration of ANY vapor product. ISFA condemns in the strongest possible terms the sale or use of black-market products and does not endorse the manipulation or adulteration of vapor products to consume THC, THC oil, marijuana, or synthetic products like K2. E-cigarettes and other nicotine-containing vapor products are designed for the consumption of nicotine to provide adult smokers an alternative to cigarettes; they are not intended to be used to consume illicit substances.

No person, adult or otherwise, should:

- Misuse or alter a vapor device designed for vaping nicotine-containing products by attempting to vape anything other than an e-liquid designed to be used with that device;
- Misuse any products other than those purchased from a reputable establishment; and
- Use a vapor product offered to them by someone else without knowing precisely what they are consuming

Flavors in vaping products

Implementing a flavor ban on e-cigarettes will put over 100 vapor shops in Indiana out of business. This type of government overreach will also shut down more than 10,000 American small businesses across the nation. The problem is not flavors, the problem is youth access. Flavored vaping products are one of the most effective smoking cessation tools on the market. A study by the New England Journal of Medicine found that vapor products are nearly twice as effective at helping adults quit smoking than any other nicotine replacement methods like the patch or pill. There has been no indication that industry standard nicotine-containing vapor products are to blame for recent cases of lung illness, banning flavors is not the answer. The Royal College of Physicians and Public Health England have reviewed all the peer-reviewed research and concluded that nicotine-vapor products are at least 95% safer than cigarettes. Instead of considering a flavor ban to protect the youth of Indiana, ISFA recommends stiffer penalties to retailers who sell to minors and considering Tobacco 21 as a viable option to prevent youth access.

We look forward to working with public health officials, the media, and the Indiana General Assembly on creating better pathways to prevent youth access of legitimate vapor products and we would hope that the goal of all public health initiatives is to inform the general public with correct and accurate information about the cause of vapor related illnesses.

Sincerely,

Amy M. Netherton
President



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