

ALLIANCE NEWS



Alliance for Better Communities

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VAPING: THE DANGERS APPEAR TO BE MUCH GREATER THAN ORIGINALLY THOUGHT

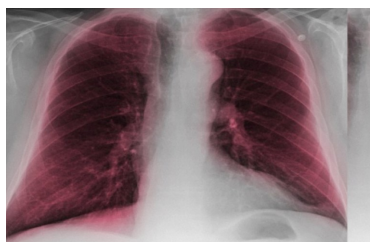
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Vaping was originally promoted not only as a safe alternative to smoking cigarettes, but also as a means to quite smoking. The popularity of vaping exploded, particularly among teens and even pre-teens, with the introduction of the Juul, a USB shaped device designed for inhaling high concentrations of flavored nicotine. Juul Tobacco Company has continually argued that it has never targeted young people and that its product is intended as an adult alternative to cigarette smoking. The company's mission statement alleges that its goal is *"improving the lives of the world's one billion adult smokers by eliminating cigarettes"*. The company further alleges, *"By accommodating cigarette-like nicotine levels, Juul provides satisfaction to meet the standards of smokers looking to switch from smoking cigarettes."*¹



Vision: To have a community that is fully committed to the health and safety of its residents.

Mission: To reduce underage drinking and substance abuse and expeditiously address any emerging threats.



However, over this past summer physicians nationwide reported an alarming outbreak of mysterious and life-threatening vaping-related illnesses. Otherwise healthy young people in their late teens and 20s, with a history of vaping, began showing up in emergency rooms with severe shortness of breath, often after suffering for several days with vomiting, fever and fatigue. The outbreak

has been called an epidemic by physicians nationwide.² At the end of August, in just one week, the number of serious lung related illnesses found to be related to vaping nearly doubled. The exact cause of these illnesses remains a mystery, although all appear to arise out of vaping.³



In August, the CDC began an ongoing investigation into hundred of cases of severe lung illnesses related to vaping, some leading to deaths. The agency noted that the cases involved several different vaping devices and the inhalation of a variety of substances, including nicotine and cannabis. Brian King, deputy director of research translation at the CDC's smoking and health division, stated, "*The bottom line is that there's a variety of things in e-cigarette aerosols that could have implications for lung health*".⁴



Juul is now being investigated by Congress and federal health regulators. Lawsuits have also been filed against the company by both teen and adult plaintiffs. The premise of these actions is that Juul has allegedly targeted underage users, even though the company has strongly disputed the claim. Former CEO Kevin

Burns agreed that the outbreak of severe lung illnesses primarily among young people is "*worrisome for the category; worrisome for us, if we contributed to it.*" Nonetheless, the company has refused to pause sales of vaping devices pending discovery of the exact cause of the rash of life threatening illnesses.⁵

Several states are considering legislation banning vaping with flavored e-cigarettes. Michigan recently passed a law prohibiting online and retail sales of flavored nicotine vaping products.⁶ In mid-September Gov. Cuomo issued an emergency ban on flavored e-cigarettes in New York giving retailers 2 weeks to remove merchandise from their shelves. Vape shop owners have threatened litigation claiming that the ban should have been presented to lawmakers for hearings, debate and a vote.⁷

Juul recently ceased all advertising of its products, and CEO Burns stepped down.⁸

LOCAL MEDICAL ISSUES RELATING TO VAPING

VAPING RELATED ILLNESSES REPORTED IN THE NORTH COUNTRY

At least three vaping related cases of lung illness have been reported in Jefferson County. County Health planner and Alliance chairman Stephen Jennings stated that these cases are in line with those which have been seen on a national level. Mr. Jennings reported that the ages of over 80 victims known so far statewide range from 14 to 69. These victims report using a wide variety of vaping products including those containing nicotine, cannabis, and cbd. Illness symptoms include coughing, shortness of breath, nausea, fatigue and fever.⁹



SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY STUDENT ALLEGES MASSIVE BRAIN DAMAGE FROM VAPING

A Syracuse University student claims in a lawsuit that he suffered a stroke and brain damage from vaping with a Juul device. He alleges that he got hooked on vaping as a teen, and became addicted to nicotine. His vaping habit became so extreme he was using 2 complete Juul “pods” per day, vaping every 10 to 20 minutes. In the summer of 2017, he suffered a massive stroke.

The lawsuit alleges that the student underwent multiple brain surgeries to treat effects of the stroke and suffered permanent damages.

Juul’s defense states that the company intended its products for adults only, and that young people were not targeted in marketing campaigns.¹⁰

ELEVEN YEAR OLD SUFFERS VAPING RELATED MEDICAL PROBLEM

The serious risks of vaping for pre-teens were confirmed in late September when an 11 year old Watertown boy was transported to Samaritan Medical Center with throat and chest pain and vomiting induced by experimentation with an e-cigarette. Police responded to the scene as well. The incident highlighted the problem of e-cigarettes getting into the hands of children.¹¹

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PIVOT TO HOLD COMMUNITY TALKS AND ART EVENT



Pivot and the Alliance are holding a "Community Talks" event on Oct 5, 2019, starting at 9:00 a.m., at the Salmon Run Mall. Students in k-12 are invited to participate by creating art pieces embodying the theme, "Show How You Keep NNY Healthy. Speakers will also make presentations, and there will be panel discussions, about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse.