

TO: Vermont Health Care Providers
FROM: Mark Levine, MD, Commissioner of Health

First Case of Severe Vaping-associated Pulmonary Illness Confirmed

Screen, counsel and refer patients to quit resources. Continue to report possible cases.

The Vermont Department of Health has just confirmed the first case of vaping-associated severe respiratory illness in a Vermont resident, and five other possible cases are currently being investigated. The Health Department issued a [Health Advisory](#) on August 29, 2019, and has been collaborating with CDC, FDA, and state and local health departments on the multistate outbreak of lung disease associated with e-cigarette product (devices, liquids, refill pods, cartridges) use.

As of September 11, 380 confirmed and probable cases and six deaths have been [reported to CDC](#) from 36 states and one territory. All reported cases have a history of e-cigarette product use or vaping. Most patients (>80%) have reported a history of using e-cigarette products containing THC. Many have reported using THC and nicotine. Some have reported using e-cigarette products containing only nicotine.

Although cases appear similar, it isn't clear whether these cases have a common cause, or if they are different diseases with similar presentations. The investigation has not identified any specific e-cigarette or vaping product or substance that is linked to all cases.

Situation Reports – CDC updates the national case report once a week, and does not yet include Vermont's current case numbers. For updates on the situation in Vermont: healthvermont.gov/vapingillness

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

- **Screen all patients for vaping.** Ask all patients if they use e-cigarettes. Electronic cigarettes – or e-cigarettes – are also called vapes, e-hookahs, vape pens, and electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS).
- **Advise patients who vape to stop – or not to start.** Strongly advise all patients who are using these products to quit immediately. Advise all patients not to start using.
- **Offer patients counseling and medication treatment.** For information about tobacco cessation resources: 802quits.org/providers or refer patients to 1-800-QUIT-NOW or 802quits.org. To find treatment and support for marijuana use cessation: healthvermont.gov/find-treatment. Patients can also dial 2-1-1 to find treatment for alcohol or drug use, including marijuana.

- **Continue to report possible cases.** Report cases of significant respiratory illness of unclear etiology and a history of inhalational drug use (including vaping or smoking of any plant or chemical) in the 90 days prior to onset of symptoms associated with this outbreak to the Health Department at 802-863-7240.

For assistance with clinical management of patients suspected of illness related to recreational, illicit, or other drugs, call the poison control center at 1-800-222-1222.

If you have any questions please contact the HAN Coordinator at 802-859-5900 or vthan@vermont.gov.

HAN Message Type Definitions

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation may not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Info Service Message: Provides general correspondence from VDH, which is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.