



July 22, 2019
The City of Richmond
Richmond City Council
440 Civic Center Plaza
Richmond, CA 94804

Dear Mayor Tom Butt and Richmond City Council Members,

The City of Richmond is considering an ordinance that would expand the prohibition of new tobacco products which require premarket review and have not yet been approved for marketing by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). These new products include electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) devices that can be used as a delivery system to consume nicotine in an aerosolized or vaporized form. Contra Costa Health Services is sending this letter in support of the policy and encourages the Richmond City Council to formally consider the amendment to the existing Tobacco Retailer License ordinance.

According to data from the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) the prevalence of cigarette smoking among U.S. adults declined from approximately 21% in 2005 to less than 14% in 2017¹. E-cigarettes have often been depicted as an effective cessation device for adults, although the FDA has not approved the product for this use. The CDC estimates that 53% of daily adult smokers in California quit smoking for one or more days in 2017, yet in the same year only 3.0% adults used e-cigarettes². Many adults are using e-cigarettes in an attempt to quit smoking. However, most adult e-cigarette users do not stop smoking cigarettes and instead continue the use of both tobacco products³.

While there has been a steady decline in smoking prevalence and the use of e-cigarettes by adults, this decrease is in direct contradiction to the dramatic increase in smoking rates among young people, the majority of whom are overwhelmingly choosing e-cigarettes as their tobacco product of choice. In fact, for every adult who tries to quit smoking using e-cigarettes, there are 80 additional youth who initiate daily use of tobacco through e-cigarettes, and unfortunately in many cases these youth also become dual users of both cigarettes and e-cigarettes.⁴

The *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration's 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health* indicates that each day in the U.S. about 2,000 youth less than 18 years of age smoke their first cigarette and more than 300 youth under 18 years of age become daily cigarette smokers. The recent increase in e-cigarette use is the primary driver of increases in tobacco product usage among young people; contributing to a startling reversal of overall declines in youth tobacco use from previous years.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [Current Cigarette Smoking Among Adults—United States, 2017](#). Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 2018;67(44):1225-32 [accessed 2019 Jan 30].

² CDC, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, State Tobacco Activities Tracking and Evaluation System, 2017.

³ [QuickStats: Cigarette Smoking Status Among Current Adult E-cigarette Users, by Age Group — National Health Interview Survey, United States, 2015](#). MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2016;65:1177.

⁴ Soneji SS, Sung H-Y, Primack BA, Pierce JP, Sargent JD (2018) Quantifying population-level health benefits and harms of e-cigarette use in the United States. PLoS ONE 13(3): e0193328. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0193328>



The combined number of middle and high school students using e-cigarettes rose from 2.1 million in 2017 to 3.6 million in 2018, accounting for an approximately 1.5 million youth⁵ who used e-cigarettes over a one year period of time. In addition, the National Youth Tobacco Survey which is a voluntary youth survey facilitated by the CDC, indicated that from 2017 to 2018 current e-cigarette use by high school students increased by 78% from 11.7% to 20.8%; and for middle schoolers there was an increase by 48% from 3.3% to 4.9%⁶. However, with this trend comes many negative health risks that most youth do not consider beforehand.

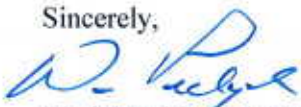
Contrary to popular belief, e-cigarettes are not harmless as they emit aerosols, not “water vapor”. The aerosols emitted by e-cigarettes contain volatile organic compounds, heavy metals, ultrafine particles at higher levels than regular cigarettes, and chemicals that have been cited as part of California’s Prop 65 list of toxins known to cause cancer, birth defects, and other reproductive harm.

In 2016 the Office of the Surgeon General published a report entitled “*E-cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of The Surgeon General*” which concluded that youth use of nicotine in any form, including e-cigarettes is unsafe, can harm adolescent brain development which impacts attention, memory, learning and causes many youth to become addicted. Additionally, due to the fact that adolescence is a critical period of growth and development, exposure to nicotine may have lasting, adverse consequences on brain development⁷.

The tobacco industry has been strategic in changing social norms through youth use of e-cigarettes, utilizing effective marketing techniques, enticing flavors, claiming these devices have no harmful effects, convenience, and cost effectiveness, thereby creating a new generation of youth culture that has normalized vaping (Public Health Law Center, 2019). However, it is imperative that efforts to limit the availability of tobacco products such as e-cigarettes not be undone.

Contra Costa Health Services applauds the City of Richmond for taking this vital step in ensuring that the health of all residents, in particularly the young citizens of Richmond are protected from the harmful substances contained in e-cigarettes by reducing the potential for youth to access and utilize this highly addictive tobacco product. Finally, if we can be of any assistance during this process, we offer the support of our Tobacco Prevention Project to provide technical assistance to your staff to ensure the success of this endeavor.

Sincerely,



Daniel Peddycord, RN, MPA
Director of Public Health
Contra Costa Health Services

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [Vital Signs: Tobacco Product Use Among Middle and High School Students – United States, 2011–2018](#). Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 2019;68(06) [accessed 2019 Feb 28].

⁶ Cullen KA, Ambrose BK, Gentzke AS, Apelberg BJ, Jamal A, King BA. *Notes from the Field: Increase in use of electronic cigarettes and any tobacco product among middle and high school students — United States, 2011–2018*. MMWR Morbid Mortal Wkly Rep. 2018;67(45):XX–XX

⁷ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), *The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General, 2014*, <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/50-years-of-progress/>. See also, HHS, *Prevention Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults, A Report of the Surgeon General, 2012*

