e-cigarettes
Delivering Chemicals, Cannabis and Nicotine to Growing Number of Washington Youth

ISSUE
The popularity of e-cigarettes and other “vapor products” is on the rise, posing a threat to youth health, yet these products are not adequately regulated at a federal or state level. The American Public Health Association has recommended that states and municipalities enact laws prohibiting the use of e-cigarettes in enclosed public areas and places of employment due to their potential as a source of pollutants.¹ These devices produce an aerosol of exhaled nicotine, ultra-fine particles and other toxins rather than a harmless water vapor.²

WHAT WE KNOW
• One in five high school seniors in Washington reported e-cigarette use in 2014, up from one in fourteen in 2012.³ Nicotine is particularly harmful to brain development in children and a recent study found that teens who start using e-cigarettes are 8 times more likely to take up smoking.⁴
• Recent studies have shown the increasing popularity among high school students of using e-cigarettes to smoke cannabis.⁵ Kids who use nicotine or marijuana at a young age are susceptible to addiction and continued use in adulthood.⁶ “As compared with persons who begin to use marijuana in adulthood, those who begin in adolescence are approximately 2 to 4 times as likely to have symptoms of cannabis dependence within 2 years after first use.”⁷
• E-liquid, the nicotine-containing component, can poison children via ingestion, inhalation, ocular exposure, and skin contact. In 2015, at least 61 e-cigarette poisonings have been reported, with 59 percent involving 1 to 3 year olds.⁸ E-liquids are often sold without child resistant packaging and in alluring candy-like flavors, including caramel apple, wacky taffy and bubble gum.
• The FDA does not currently regulate ingredients or safety claims made by manufacturers. Some products that are labeled “nicotine-free” actually contain small amounts of nicotine.⁹ A Harvard study also recently discovered diacetyl, an ingredient known to cause “popcorn lung” (bronchiolitis obliterans), in 75 percent of the flavored e-liquids they tested.¹⁰
• In Washington, state law prohibits the sale of e-cigarettes to minors, but doesn’t do anything else to regulate e-cigarettes or the people who sell them (including online sellers). Grant, King, Pierce, Clark, and Snohomish Counties have passed ordinances regulating e-cigarettes. Other counties are considering similar ordinances.

²PLOS ONE (http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0057967)
⁴JAMA (http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=2436539)
⁵American Academy of Pediatrics (http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2015/09/01/peds.2015-1776abstract?sid=406ba54c-3fa9-448a-9f53-c5b88b7bb8df)
⁹FDA (http://www.fda.gov/downloads/drugs/scienceresearch/ucm173250.pdf)
¹⁰Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health (http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/15-10185/)