

September 30, 2019

*Remarks made by Dr. Sarah Moyer, family physician and Mayor Greg Fischer's Chief Health Strategist at a press conference held at the Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness to discuss the growing number of lung injuries and deaths across the country, and in Kentucky, related to vaping.*

*Dr. Moyer was joined by Mayor Greg Fischer, Dr. Marty Pollio, superintendent of Jefferson County Public Schools, Ben Chandler, President and CEO of Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky, Dr. Karen Cost, chair of the Louisville Board of Health, Dr. Craig Blakely, Dean of the University of Louisville School of Public Health and Dr. Aruni Bhatnagar, Professor of Medicine and Director of the Christina Brown Envirome Institute at the University of Louisville.*

- We are here today because of a very serious outbreak of severe lung injury associated with vaping and e-cigarette use.
- This outbreak puts a fine point on what was already a public health crisis threatening to undo decades of progress reducing tobacco related illness and death.
- As public health professionals, our message is simple:
  1. **Vaping is not safe.** The industry is not regulated by the FDA and, right now, there is no way to know if products you buy in a store are safer than products you buy on the street. Stop vaping.
  2. Parents, teachers and mentors, it is critical that you discuss this outbreak with your children. Let them know about the life-threatening consequences of vaping and e-cigarette use. If they are vaping, treat it as a serious medical issue. Help them stop vaping.

3. If you are using e-cigarettes containing nicotine to quit cigarette smoking, ***do not return to smoking cigarettes***. The Department of Public Health and Wellness offers free smoking and vaping cessation classes with FDA approved nicotine replacement products such as patches and gum. Call us at 574-STOP, that's 574-7867. We can help you stop smoking.

- Here's what we KNOW about the outbreak so far:
- It continues to grow quickly. As of September 27, there had been 805 cases of lung injury reported from 46 states, including Kentucky.
- Twelve deaths have been confirmed in 10 states, including our neighboring state Indiana.
- As of September 27, Kentucky had 20 cases under investigation, with three probable cases and one confirmed case. One of the cases under investigation is from Louisville.
- Symptoms include cough, shortness of breath and fatigue much like a cold. But unlike a cold, these symptoms grow worse over a period of days or weeks, eventually requiring admission to the hospital. Other symptoms may include fever, chest pain, weight loss, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhea.
- **ALL** cases have a history of e-cigarette product use or vaping.

- If you have recently used an e-cigarette or vaping product and you have symptoms like these, please see your doctor or a healthcare provider.
- You may have heard that this has only happened to people who use THC products bought on the black market. THIS IS NOT TRUE.
- Investigators have not been able to narrow down the cause of this very serious lung injury to any specific group of vaping products, or substances.
- Right now, we can't say that there are ANY vaping products, including those bought in stores, that do not cause this deadly lung condition.
- That's why we are advising everyone to stop vaping.
- I'm a physician and a public health advocate, and a mom of 4 young kids. My goal, my passion, is to help people live longer healthier lives.
- The most concerning thing that we know about this disease is that it primarily affects our young people.
- More than two-thirds of those who have gotten sick are between the ages 18 and 34; and another 16% are under age 18.
- Over the past couple of decades, decreased teen cigarette use was a public health win. In just a few years, the progress we made has been reversed.

- E-cigarettes have been marketed as being safe, but we don't know that. These products are not regulated by any agency. We don't know what is in them, and the chemicals that we do know they contain, are not safe.
- As a doctor, I have seen patients struggling to breathe and the terrified look in their eyes as they realize they can't get any air. I have seen children on a ventilator, unable to speak to the anxious parents sitting helplessly at their bedside.
- As a mom, I don't want to be that parent. As a public health professional, I don't want anyone to be that parent.
- This is what you need to know:
  1. **Stop Vaping. There are no products we know are safe.**
  2. If you've used e-cigarettes to try to quit cigarette smoking, ***do not return to smoking traditional cigarettes.***
  3. Anyone can call us at 574-STOP and sign up for a free Stop Smoking and vaping class.
- Before I bring up Ben Chandler, I want to thank my team for investigating cases, and staying up to date on the latest information and treatment resources.
- Thank you to the Board of Health for being passionate and supportive on this issue
- And to Dr. Aruni Bhatnagar who's been a world leader in research on the health affects from vaping.

- Now we'll hear from Ben Chandler of the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky on efforts being taken to prevent young adults from starting vaping in the first place.