

Comments for SHD Vaporizer Listening Session

Joe Neigel - 751 5th Street, Sultan, WA 98294 | neigelj@monroe.wednet.edu | 360-804-2594

Brief bio

I am a Prevention Specialist for Monroe Public Schools that has worked in the field of substance abuse prevention for nearly a decade. I presently serve as an elected councilmember in the City of Sultan, I'm an alternate on Community Transit's Board of Directors, and I coordinate the Monroe Community Coalition as part of Washington State's Community Prevention and Wellness Initiative.

Who are we talking about today? Three distinct classifications of stakeholders

1. People with nicotine addictions who believe they may experience less adverse health impacts by transitioning from tobacco cigarettes to a vaporizing device;
2. Adults who want to recreate with vape devices without undue interference from government;
3. Trade industry stakeholders; and
4. **Young people who are not addicted to nicotine or other substances that will develop vaporizing device habits that could lead to substance dependence and long-term negative health outcomes.**

Why I'm providing comment

I am here today to address the rapidly increasing use of electronic vaporizing devices by teenagers and young people, which I believe is a significant public health concern.

Fast Facts

- According to data available from the most recent National Youth Tobacco Survey (conducted by the Centers for Disease Control), many teens who use vaping devices could be considered "nonsmokers;" the number of non-smoking youth who initiate first use of nicotine or other substances with a vaporizing device is significantly and rapidly growing.

Our local data speaks truth to this finding – According to Snohomish County Healthy Youth Survey data, the percentage of 12th grade vape users has significantly increased from year-to-year while the percentage of cigarette users has essentially remained steady. If vaping really is primarily being used as cessation device by young people, we would expect the percentage of cigarette smokers to decrease in proportion to the rise in vape device usage. It hasn't.

	SnoCo HYS Cohort 1		SnoCo HYS Cohort 2	
	2010 – 10 th graders	2012 – 12 th graders	2012 – 10 th graders	2014 – 12 th graders
Cigarette Users	13.5% (n=476)	14.5% (n=453)	9.1% (n=370)	14.6% (n=343)
Vape Use	---- (Not asked)	5.2% (n=82)	3.1% (n=65)	22.1% (n=264)

- Youth are particularly vulnerable to "optimism bias:" Because young people may perceive e-cigarettes as less harmful than conventional cigarettes, those with little previous experience with tobacco are at-risk for nicotine addiction through experimentation with e-cigarettes.
Source: Arnett JJ.: Addictive Behaviors - Journal. 2000; 25(4):625–632.

- Scientists have established a clear link between nicotine use and vulnerability to other substance use. **An analysis of Snohomish County’s data from the 2014 Healthy Youth Survey confirms that youth engagement in vaping is associated with increased rates of engagement in other at-risk behaviors.** *Source: Science Translational Medicine, 2011 & Monroe Community Coalition HYS analysis, 2015*

Healthy Youth Survey 2014 – 12th Grade, Snohomish County

12 th Grade Current Use of...	Total Use Rates %	Use Rates among Non-Vape Users %	Use Rates among Vape Users %	Elevated likelihood of poly use
Alcohol	32.3	21.1	70.5	3.3x
Cigarettes	14.6	4.6	43.6	9.3x
Marijuana	26.7	13.7	68.1	5.0x
Rx Pain Killers	5.9	1.6	15.9	9.9x
Other Illicit Drugs	7.3	1.7	22.0	12.9x

In the absence of evidence assuring the safety of vape devices and paraphernalia, the Board of Health should act to protect young consumers.

We know prevention works

- Thanks to the well-funded Washington State Tobacco Prevention and Control Program and strong tobacco control policies, between 1999-2008 the smoking rate in Washington State fell from 23 percent to 14.7 percent; during this period Washington rose from being ranked 22nd to 3rd in terms of the lowest smoking rate among all US states. Following budget cuts to the Program in 2008, prevalence increased to 16.1% by 2013. – Source: Department of Health and UW white paper E-cigarettes: Evidence and policy options for Washington State

The University of Washington conducted a meta-analysis of effective tobacco use reduction policies that can influence vape device use by young people. **In addition to expanding the Smoking In Public Places law, the Board of Health should seriously consider:**

“A” Rated Strategies	Policy options with at least 10 well-designed studies that support the association of a named strategy with a reduction in youth tobacco use.
Taxation	Numerous large, well-designed studies support the efficacy of taxation in reducing smoking prevalence and improving health outcomes.
Age of Purchase (RCW 70.155.100)	Significant evidence demonstrates that preventing youth initiation will result in a reduced smoking prevalence and improved health outcomes.
Prohibiting Flavoring	A number of well-designed studies show that flavored products appeal to youth, who are vulnerable to nicotine addiction
Marketing Restrictions	There is abundant evidence of a dose-response relationship between exposure to tobacco marketing and use, including in convenience store settings
Retail Licensure (“B” Rated = 5+ Studies)	Retail licensure allows for tracking and regulation of industry growth and density. There is much evidence linking substance availability to increased use.

Summary of Heraldnet.com comments from July 19, 2015 (Increase in Vaping Sparks New Rules)

Vapor product manufacturers have nothing to gain by intentionally making harmful products.

This is a spurious claim. The goal of any for-profit business in a capitalist society is to remain viable by making profit. While creating harmful products may not generate lasting revenue, creating products to sustain or create addiction is absolutely profitable.

Vapor products directly contribute to mitigating the societal burden of smoking by virtue of being the most wildly successful smoking cessation technology ever.

This assertion has no data to support it. Early research show most smokers who vape continue to use cigarettes.

“Teens try things. Those that vape would have smoked instead, so not restricting their use is better for society.” “Vapor products are diverting young people away from cigarettes.” “Anybody you see vaping would be SMOKING if you banned this.”

Data indicates that rates of smoking for high school seniors living in Snohomish County have held steady while use of vaping devices have disproportionately increased. The truth is more kids are initiating use of nicotine by vaping because it doesn't have the same social stigma that smoking has.

If vaping is regulated exactly like smoking, then smokers will have little incentive to switch.

E-cigarettes are not proven cessation devices; nevertheless, if people are switching to vape devices from cigarettes because they believe vaping is less risky than smoking, price should have little influence on that motivation.

Increased calls to poison control does NOT mean there are poisonings.

It does mean that little ones are more frequently becoming exposed to e-juice products and that there is growing recognition of the harm certain concentrates can cause.

Regulating e-cig use and subjecting the product to a device-specific tax is unfair.

Perhaps, but the community has a vested interest in suppressing nicotine dependence, which alters the development of teen brains (prefrontal cortex – decision making center) and creates memory and attention deficits.

I'd love to hear your theory on how seeing someone vaping (i.e. ostentatiously NOT using tobacco) would cause any person to become more likely to use tobacco.

Local data analysis shows teens who vape are 9.3x more likely to smoke cigarettes than teens who do not vape. Teen behavior is also influenced by community norms. Teens are resourceful and will use alternatives to vaping when they need to.