

I thank the Committee for allowing me to speak on this important topic. I particularly thank Senator Slossberg and Representative Ritter for sponsoring the Bill 415.

The purveyors of hookah lounges are seeking to expand in Connecticut. Hookah smoking has been compared to cigarette, cigar and western pipe smoking. **But hookah smoking has the well known detrimental health hazards of these tobacco products and more.**

**Sharing pipes** are an essential part of the hookah experience. Many, if not most, hookah pipes are built to be smoked by more than one person.

In sharing the pipe, hookah lounges customers **smoke partially used products from other customers.**

Hookah smoking lounges provide **used pipes** to the customer.

For these and other reasons, the World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), American Academy of Pediatrics, and many health authorities across the globe have acknowledged that hookah smoking poses substantial detrimental communicable disease risks. Most noticeable is tuberculosis. **The World Health Organization (WHO) regional office in Cairo estimates that 17 percent of TB cases in the eastern Mediterranean are attributable to the smoking of water pipes.**

Studies in Denmark have shown that water pipe smoking with a person with active TB is the same as living in the same household with an active TB patient.

**The Mayo clinic sites unclean hookah pipes as a source for communicable disease.** The diseases of concern are many: herpes, H. Pyloris, influenza, cold viruses, hepatitis A, etc.

The water, even tap water when vaporized, used in hookah pipes may be a source of communicable diseases such as Legionella.

Public health authorities such as Dr. Wasim Maziak site that there has not been a proven safe way to clean and sanitize hookah pipes. The lung is exquisitely susceptible to damage and infection. Properly cleaning and sanitizing a hookah pipe would require a high level sanitization.

Hookah smokers deeply inhale smoke from charcoal or coal. Hookah smoke produces as much as 11 times the amount of carbon monoxide as cigarettes. Actual acute carbon monoxide poisoning has been reported with the use of hookah. A study in Florida found student hookah smokers with levels of exhaled carbon monoxide up to “treatable levels” for fire fighters.

Burning coal/charcoal produces heavy metals such as lead and chromium and other chemical pollutants. Among other things, this smoke can produce cancer causing agents and, in women, low birth weight babies

Hookah smokers burn other substances such as molasses, fruit, and other substances. These charred products produce polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, cancer risk agents.

Studies have demonstrated that hookah smoking is strongly associated with lung cancer, respiratory illness, low birth weight and periodontal disease.

Most importantly, the practice of hookah smoking is very deceptive to the uninformed and to those vulnerable, particularly adolescents and young adults. The smoke is cool, non irritating aromatic, sweet and fruit flavored. Hookah purveyors say “no one gets sick from hookahs.” The record has evidence to the contrary.

There is a need for high-quality studies to identify and quantify all the health effects of this form of smoking. But **we know enough to take preventive action.** We should not wait for the bodies and health care bills to roll in. Ban the practice of public hookah smoking.

The Connecticut legislature has taken leadership in protecting the public from the health threats of cigarettes, tobacco and pipes. We, especially our young people, need your help now.

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