
Pamela Mautte, Director of the Greater Valley Substance Abuse Action Council
Testimony in Support of
SB 990- AAC SMOKING POLICIES AND PROHIBITING SMOKING IN CERTAIN AREAS.
March 15, 2013 Public Health Committee Hearing

Good afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, Senator Welch and Representative Srinivasan and members of the Public Health Committee. I am Pamela Mautte, Director of the Greater Valley Substance Abuse Action Council, one of the state's 13 Regional Action Councils in CT and a program of BHcare a state licensed non-profit behavioral health care provider.

As a prevention professional working on tobacco issues, I support Senate Bill No. 990.

I have been working on tobacco issues for the past 15 years and have seen significant results in the reduction of both youth and adult smoking rates. These reductions are a direct result of comprehensive tobacco policies and programs that have been implemented throughout the state. We must maintain these reductions and continue to promote the social norm of smoking being socially unacceptable.

Over the past four years, we have been learning more and more about the electronic cigarette, or electronic nicotine delivery device. An electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) is a battery-operated device that looks, feels, and tastes like a tobacco cigarette. They deliver nicotine, flavor, and other chemicals to the user in the form of a vapor. They are growing in popularity, dropping in price, and do not contain tobacco.

E-cigarettes work by vaporizing a liquid mixed with nicotine. Water vapor is released from the end of the device, like smoke from cigarettes, and the nicotine is inhaled. They come in disposable packages or rechargeable kits. The device itself can look like a traditional cigarette, or have a more unassuming presentation that resembles a pen. These devices are now being brought into classrooms and workplaces by people as a way to cut back on smoking, or suppress nicotine cravings / withdrawal in places that tobacco use is prohibited. There is no difference in appearance of someone smoking a cigarette and someone using an electronic cigarette in these settings. The use in these locations is sending mixed messages to our young people that smoking is again socially acceptable and these devices are not harmful.

These devices are easily accessible to youth and can be purchased online, in convenience stores, and at mall kiosks many times without identification. These devices appeal to youth for

many reasons including the colors of the devices, the non tobacco odor, sleek high tech look, as the availability of flavors such chocolate, bubble gum, cotton candy, and many more.

While e-cigarettes reduce exposure to harmful byproducts of tobacco use, the product features nicotine, the chemical that causes tobacco addiction. The perception of e-cigarettes being “healthier” can and will lead to increased use in teens. The e-cigarettes, which contain various amounts of nicotine, make it more difficult for users to monitor their intake of the addictive substance.

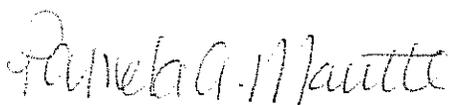
Most electronic cigarettes are currently manufactured overseas. The FDA has conducted testing of these devices on the market and has found that, among other things, the amount of nicotine claimed to be in these devices is far from correct. More specifically, cartridges that were labeled as containing no nicotine had low levels of nicotine in all cartridges tested, except one. In addition, many cartridges in the study delivered significantly more nicotine than was stated on the packaging. This mislabeling is cause for major concern to youth using the product, the public, and people struggling with nicotine dependence.

Again, I stress that the use of the e-cigarette inside malls, theaters, stores, workplaces, and college classrooms portrays that smoking is again socially acceptable and normalizes the behavior in the eyes of a child. This alone can increase the use of the product among youth.

In addition, I support the proposal to redefine the areas where tobacco use would be permitted. Moving tobacco use 25 feet away from all doorways and windows of properties defined as tobacco-free helps to protect the health and wellbeing of anyone entering/exiting these establishments. I would urge that the proposed legislation not only include tobacco use, but also nicotine delivery devices such as the e-cigarette. By moving tobacco use further away from buildings, we improve the health of everyone and continue to promote tobacco products / nicotine delivery devices as socially unacceptable.

Thank you so very much for your time and continued support in addressing this important issue.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pamela A. Mautte". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pamela A. Mautte

Director