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Connecticut State Medical Society
Testimony in Support of House Bill 5219 An Act Prohibiting the Use of Electronic
Cigarettes in Schools
Presented to the Public Health Committee
February 23, 2015

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee, on behalf of the physicians and physicians in training of the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS) thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony to you today in support of **House Bill 5219 An Act Prohibiting the Use of Electronic Cigarettes in Schools**. While we are here to support this legislation before you today, we ask that the language also be expanded to prohibit the use of electronic cigarettes in those settings in which the use of tobacco is currently prohibited.

Unfortunately, many, including a large majority of minors, view electronic cigarettes as a safer alternative to both smoke and smokeless tobacco products. This is not true. Nicotine delivered electronically is just as addictive and damaging as nicotine inhaled or otherwise absorbed by means of traditional tobacco products. In addition, chemicals added to nicotine in electronic cigarettes to help create the inhaled vapor are known to be as harmful as the chemicals contained in smoke and smoke free tobacco.

Physicians deal with patients addicted to nicotine and its related health implications on a daily basis. We see the damage that is done by these products and understand the importance of taking every opportunity to protect our patients from this scourge. Schools are the critical environment for learning; the place where our children learn science, math and English, and where they also learn and develop habits that we trust will be good and conducive to long, happy and productive lives. Banning tobacco products, but permitting a nicotine delivery system because it uses an electronically generated delivery system is not consistent with the goal of promoting healthy habits. Physicians and society in general should not forsake any opportunity to protect our most vulnerable patients and citizens from exposure to harmful products, including nicotine. Prohibiting electronic cigarettes is a step in the right direction.