



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES
A Healthcare Service Agency

Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D.
Acting Commissioner

Memorandum:

TO: Public Health Committee

FROM: Deputy Commissioner Miriam Delphin-Rittmon

DATE: March 11, 2015

SUBJECT: Written Testimony on House Bill 6283

Good Afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. I am Miriam Delphin-Rittmon Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), and I am writing today to address proposed HB 6283 AN ACT REGULATING ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES.

Electronic cigarettes represent a new phase of the nicotine epidemic and a new route to nicotine addiction for minors. Studies from the Center for Disease Control and the University of California San Francisco reported a doubling of e-cigarette use among middle and high school students in 2011-12, and that youth using e-cigarettes were more likely to be trying to quit, but also were less likely to have stopped smoking and were smoking more, not less. We also know anecdotally (from a February 17th National Public Radio article) that teens are attracted to e-cigarettes because of the “cool” flavors, the reduced costs, and the ease of use. However, use of e-cigarettes is associated with heavier use of conventional cigarettes and may increase harm by creating a new pathway for youth to become addicted to nicotine and by reducing the odds that an adolescent will stop smoking conventional cigarettes. Nicotine initiation and dual use are serious concerns for our department and we support efforts to limit the use of electronic cigarettes.

By any standard, tobacco prevention and tobacco regulation in Connecticut has been an enormous success. Cigarette use reported in the 2013 YRBS is at a record low. Connecticut’s *Clean Indoor Air Act* has successfully changed tobacco use behaviors in public and in the work place saving countless lives. Since 1997 we have successfully de-normalized tobacco behavior in Connecticut.

Electronic Cigarette use in public and in the work place as well as advertising of these products could counter this success by normalizing the appearance of tobacco use. Electronic cigarettes threaten this

success by normalizing nicotine delivery. A recent Yale study of Connecticut schools reported that 1 out of 4 students had tried an electronic cigarette. Over half the minors who reported smoking cigarettes also reported using an electronic cigarette. Electronic cigarettes contribute to “dual use” behavior that exacerbates nicotine addiction thus making it more difficult to quit.

While the department supports efforts to limit the use of electronic cigarettes, we defer to the Office of the Attorney General and the Department of Revenue Services regarding any fiscal or legal implications that may arise from the proposed statutory changes.

Thank you for your time and attention to these matters.