

# Yale SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

## *Department of Psychiatry*

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**March 7, 2016**

**TO:** Chairperson and members of the Public Health Committee.

**RE:** \*H.B. No. 5542 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE PREVENTION OF SMOKING AND TOBACCO USE.

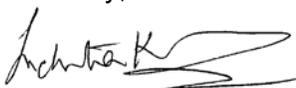
First I would like to commend you all and other legislators in CT for passing E-cigarette laws in the state to protect public health. Unfortunately the existing laws do not allow for research exemptions which would allow for the study of these products by the research community. This exemption language which is included in the proposed amendment is crucial to ensure that appropriate scientific research is conducted and evidence is collected to support federal and state-level e-cigarette regulatory goals. Unlike all the wonderful testimonies and scientific evidence I have heard today on a variety of other issues, we know very little about e-cigarettes and their effects.

E-cigarettes use rates are growing exponentially. These products are extremely popular especially among middle- and high-school adolescents and young adults. Our evidence obtained in 6 Southeastern CT schools suggests that 12% of high school students and 1.5% of middle school students report having used e-cigarettes in the past month. Among those who had not tried e-cigarettes, almost a third state that they may try them in the next year. Emerging evidence suggests that some young e-cigarette users may progress on to use of other combustible tobacco products like cigarettes. If this is true then this could reverse the significant reductions in cigarette use rates we have achieved among youth in our country. Thus, it is imperative that we understand the appeal of these novel products, and prevent initiation among youth.

Our group at Yale is conducting experimental and epidemiological studies to understand appeal and addiction to these products. Some of these studies involve administering e-cigarette to youth and young adults who are already using these products. Our work has come to a halt because of the lack of research exemptions in the e-cigarette laws. It is imperative that this research should be allowed to continue. Our work follows NIH guidelines for the conduct of substance use research in children and adults and has the approval of the Yale Institutional Review Board that is responsible for the ethical conduct of research. Our research is always conducted in a safe and controlled environment at Yale University and we always follow federal guidelines for obtaining consent. Our work and other similar projects, conducted at Yale and any other academic institutions in CT will provide novel and highly significant information on the effects and appeal of e-cigarettes. This information is very relevant to federal and state-wide regulation of these products to reduce initiation and addiction to tobacco products. So I again urge you to approve this amendment.

Thank you,

Sincerely,



Suchitra Krishnan-Sarin, Ph.D.  
Professor of Psychiatry

