



Farmington Valley Health District

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RB 7200--AN ACT PROHIBITING THE SALE OF CIGARETTES, TOBACCO PRODUCTS, ELECTRONIC NICOTINE DELIVERY SYSTEMS AND VAPOR PRODUCTS TO PERSONS UNDER AGE TWENTY-ONE.

The Farmington Valley Health District **supports RB 7200**, An Act Prohibiting the Sale of Cigarettes, Tobacco Products, Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems and Vapor Products to Persons Under Age Twenty-One.

The Institute of Medicine concluded that raising the age of purchase to 21 would reduce initiation among youth age 15-17 by 25% and by 15% in those age 18-20. In the past year the prevalence of vaping nationally has doubled among this population. This trend holds true for Connecticut where it is estimated that more than 20% of twelfth graders and 10% of ninth graders are using vaping devices. Researchers say this is the largest increase ever seen in the 44 years that they have been tracking youth behaviors around substances including alcohol and tobacco products.

The majority of youth report using social networks including friends and family to obtain their tobacco and vaping products. By raising the age of purchase to 21, those who can legally obtain these products are less likely to be in the same social circles and less willing to purchase for underage groups.

The negative health implications from exposure to nicotine and vaping byproducts are numerous. Nicotine adversely affects the developing brain. In our youth this can translate into mood disorders and permanent lowering of impulse control. The attention and learning centers of the brain are also affected. In addition, nicotine is a highly addictive substance and youth are far more susceptible. A popular brand of vaping has been shown to contain the same amount of nicotine in one "liquid pod" as a pack of cigarettes. Many teens report using one pod a day! Flavored vaping products are specifically aimed at enticing our youth and make the nicotine much more palatable. The by-products of vaping including aerosols, ultrafine particles, volatile organic compounds, heavy metals and some cancer-causing substances are also harmful to the lungs and other organs. While the health effects of long-term vaping have not been fully assessed, it is likely that additional adverse outcomes will emerge. Research is beginning to suggest that youth who vape are more likely to smoke cigarettes—a product that kills 50% of long-term smokers.

We are seeing a proliferation of vaping particularly among our youth and a renormalizing of tobacco use. Unfortunately, in the absence of laws prohibiting access, many youth have already become addicted to nicotine and will likely struggle with quitting and experience the ill health effects. Please pass this law to stem this tide and protect the health of our youth.