

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services: my name is Dr. Alyssa Goodwin, I am a pediatrician at Martins Point Healthcare and parent in Brunswick, and I am here today to testify in favor of LD 1550, An Act To End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products.

As a Primary care pediatrician and school physician I see first hand the devastating effects of flavored nicotine in my practice every day. Like many parents and health professionals, I learned about and came to understand the significance of flavored tobacco products well after the adolescent vaping epidemic was out of control in my community.

I'm very concerned that tobacco use among Maine youth has skyrocketed. I talk with my adolescent patients about substance use honestly. The trends are terrifying. By 7th grade the majority of my patients know someone who vapes, many of them in the home or in their school. My high school students speak of needing to avoid restrooms because of the rampant, uncontrolled vape use. While use of combustible nicotine products is almost unthinkable to the teens I see, they don't bat an eyelash when asked about vaping, because in their world, it is everywhere. Tobacco companies have developed an array of menthol, candy, and dessert-flavored products in colorful packaging. The sole purpose of these products is to attract new users and addict them to tobacco. With sleek, covert packaging and fun flavors like Pop Tartz, the intent of the packaging is clear: Flavors are designed to hook kids and created a customer for life.

As I pediatrician, I can tell you with authority that kids are uniquely susceptible to nicotine addiction because their brains are still developing until about age 26.¹ Many teens are vaping the equivalent of one pack of cigarettes or more per day. This is because of the high concentration of nicotine in the pods. Many of the patients I treat who vape report repeated using throughout the day. They are so addicted that they use at home, at school and often right under their parents 'or teachers' radar.

Treating this kind of nicotine addiction is one of the most challenging things I do in my practice. The addiction is powerful and negatively affects other realms of teen's physical and mental health. Frequently these patients require the highest dose of nicotine replacement to have any chance of cutting down or quitting successfully. And as these teens are battling their own addiction, they are being constantly triggered by the use that occurs around them.

Our kids won't win against the tobacco industry. They are hooked before they have a chance to understand the risk. Our children deserve better. Our children deserve our protection. Please help me take a stand for Maine's children and Maine's future.

It's time to end the sale of flavored tobacco products. Please vote 'yes' on LD 1550. Thank you for your time and I'd be glad to answer any questions you may have.

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in partnership with the Office of the U.S Surgeon General and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office on Smoking and Health, 2020. <https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/>

[knowtherisks.html](#), Accessed December 11, 2020.