

Jessica Parry
Kittery

Health and Human Services Committee
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Chairperson Claxton, Chairperson Meyer, members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Jessica Parry, a registered nurse and constituent of district 1 in Kittery, ME. I urge you to pass LD 1550 An Act to End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco. This is such an important bill as it directly effects the youth in Maine as well as the general population's lung health.

According to the U.S. FDA "8 in 10 of youth e-cigarette users are consuming products with flavors like fruit, mint, candy and menthol". The U.S. FDA also states that "Teen e-cigarette use has increased alarmingly in the United States in recent years. Though only a small percentage of teens used e-cigarettes in 2011, 28 percent of high school students and 11 percent of middle school students used e-cigarettes by 2019". We can see a direct link between the flavoring of tobacco products and the increased use amongst our youth. By preventing the sale of flavored tobacco products we can prevent the use of them amongst our youth population.

As a registered nurse I recently took care of a patient with a severe lung injury due to e-cigarette use. This patient was young and otherwise healthy however required a multi-day stay in the hospital with lifesaving measures.

Please pass this act to end the sale of flavored tobacco products as it greatly effects the health of our youth and generations to come. Lung injuries associated with vaping are just as dangerous as cigarette smoking. People who are advocating against this bill citing evidence that vaping helped them quit smoking are just continuing to damage their lungs with the vape. We are seeing more and more E-cigarette or vaping product use associated lung injuries (EVALI). According to Dr. Helen Hollingsworth who is a well-known MD as well as an Associate Professor of Medicine as Boston University School of Medicine, in an article in UpToDate (2021), which is a well-known medical resource used frequently by medical professionals, "EVALI was initially recognized in the summer of 2019. More than 2800 cases of EVALI have been reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as of February 18, 2020 and among those there have been 68 deaths". That is a 2.42% death rate. The symptoms of EVALI are just as dangerous as a viral infection like COVID-19. Dr. Hollingsworth (2021) states, "Bilateral opacities are typical in EVALI. In a series of 98 patients, bilateral opacities were noted in 100 percent, either on the chest radiograph or chest CT". These bilateral opacities tell us that there is significant damage to the lungs. Dr. Hollingsworth (2021) goes on further to demonstrate the severity of the treatment for someone with EVALI, "Approximately 95 percent of patients with EVALI have required hospitalization. Supportive care initially focuses on supplemental oxygen with a target pulse oxygen saturation of 88 to 92 percent. If nasal cannula are insufficient to achieve this target, high flow oxygen can be provided through a face mask, or possibly, high flow nasal cannula (HFNC). If hypoxemia worsens, management follows that for acute respiratory distress syndrome. In the largest series, mechanical ventilation was required in approximately 26 percent of patients". Mechanical ventilation was required in over a quarter of these cases, this shows just how serious a lung injury from vaping is.

Please vote yes on LD 1550 as it will save lives by reducing the attractiveness of vaping and smoking.

Thank you,
Jessica Parry, RN(BSN)

U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (2021). Get the latest facts on teen tobacco use. Retrieved from:
<https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/youth-and-tobacco/get-latest-facts-teen-tobacco-use>
Hollingsworth, H. (2021, April). E-cigarette or vaping product use associated lung injury (EVALI). UpToDate.com. Retrieved from:

<https://www.uptodate.com/contents/e-cigarette-or-vaping-product-use-associated-lung-injury-evali>