



For Immediate Release

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**NUMBER OF VAPING-RELATED LUNG INJURY CASES
UNDER INVESTIGATION IN CONNECTICUT CLIMBS TO 34**
GROWING BODY OF EVIDENCE SUGGESTING VAPING AND E-CIGARETTE PRODUCTS
CONTAINING THC PLAYING MAJOR ROLE IN DISEASE OUTBREAK

Hartford – The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) today is reporting three more Connecticut residents who were ill with lung injuries possibly related to using e-cigarettes or vaping, bringing the total to 34 cases that have been reported to DPH since the middle of August. Two patients remain in the hospital.

The 34 cases involve residents from seven Connecticut counties: Fairfield (17), New Haven (9), New London (3), Hartford (2), Litchfield (1), Tolland (1), and Windham (1). The age breakdown of the patients is as follows: Under 18 years of age (5), 18 to 24 years of age (9), 25 to 34 years of age (8), 35 years of age and older (12).

According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as of October 15, 2019, a total of 1,479 cases of vaping-related lung injury had been reported from 49 states and 1 U.S. territory. The CDC also reported 33 deaths had been confirmed in 24 states. Connecticut has seen one fatality.

The latest national findings suggest that products containing THC – a psychoactive component derived from marijuana – are playing a major role in the outbreak. Among patients in Connecticut, 26 patients reported using vaping products containing THC in the 90-days before becoming sick whereas two patients reported exclusive use of nicotine-containing vaping products; the specific types of vaping products used by six patients are still under investigation.

“These vaping-related lung injuries are a national public health crisis,” said DPH Commissioner Renée D. Coleman-Mitchell. “We continue to work with the CDC and other partners to find out the specific root cause of these troubling lung injuries. While the investigation continues, I am asking Connecticut residents not to use e-cigarette or vaping products that contain THC. I also want to remind everyone that as a matter of public health, there is no safe tobacco product.”

Since the specific cause or causes of lung injury are not yet known, the only way to assure that people are not at risk while the investigation continues is to consider refraining from use of all e-cigarette and vaping products. All tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, carry a risk. Regardless of the current investigation, youth, young adults, and women who are pregnant should never use e-cigarette or vaping products.

If you are an adult using e-cigarettes, or vaping products to quit smoking, do not return to smoking cigarettes. Adults addicted to nicotine using e-cigarettes should weigh all risks and benefits, and consider utilizing FDA-approved nicotine replacement therapies. The statewide tobacco use cessation telephone Quit-line is available for anyone wishing to quit using any tobacco products at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or via www.CommitToQuitCT.com

Persons with marijuana use disorder should seek evidence-based treatment by a health care provider; those services are available by calling 211.

More information about the investigation can be found on CDC's webpage:
https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease.html

Commissioner Coleman-Mitchell recently testified in front of a Congressional Committee looking into the emerging public health threat of vaping and e-cigarette use. A link to the hearing can be found here:
<https://appropriations.house.gov/events/hearings/e-cigarettes-an-emerging-threat-to-public-health>