

Press



Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Legislator Aney Paul seeks regulation of e-cigarettes under Rockland's smoking law

Legislators vote unanimously in favor of new law

New City, NY (Sept. 2, 2015) – Concerned about potential harmful health impacts, County Legislators voted 15-0 Tuesday to regulate electronic cigarettes under Rockland County's local smoking law.

“We are looking out for the safety of our children, our people, our community,” said Legislator Aney Paul, a pediatric nurse practitioner who introduced the resolution.

Electronic cigarettes, known as e-cigs, are battery-powered devices that heat liquid chemicals, including highly-addictive nicotine, into a vapor that is inhaled and exhaled by smokers.



Aney Paul

E-cigs have not been fully studied, but it has been determined that cancer-causing chemicals, including formaldehyde, have been found in varying amounts in e-cig aerosols, Paul said.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has held three public workshops since December to obtain information on e-cigs and the public's health and closed its most recent comment period on July 2.

Young people may be at particular risk, Paul said, noting that many of the e-cig aerosol cartridges come in bright colors and sport such flavors as Bubble Gum, Yummy Gummy and Cherry Crush.

Statistics released in April show that e-cig use among middle and high school students tripled from 2013 to 2014, according to data published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the FDA's Center for Tobacco Products.

The findings from the 2014 National Youth Tobacco Survey also showed that e-cig use among high school students, defined as use on at least one day in the past 30 days, increased from 4.5 percent in 2013 to 13.4 percent in 2014, rising from about 660,000 students to about 2 million students.

Among middle school students, e-cig use more than tripled from 1.1 percent in 2013 to 3.9 percent in 2014 - increasing from about 120,000 students to about 450,000 students.

E-cig use among high school students increased from 4.5 percent in 2013 to 13.4 percent in 2014, rising from about 660,000 students to about 2 million students.

Cigarettes, cigarette tobacco, roll-your-own tobacco and smokeless tobacco are all subject to the FDA's tobacco-control authority. The FDA is now finalizing the rule to bring e-cigs, hookahs and some or all cigars under that same authority.

Paul said e-cigs also pose potential harm because they may prove to act as a gateway to tobacco products that are already documented to cause health problems and even death.

The 2012 Surgeon General's Report found that about 90 percent of all smokers first tried cigarettes as teens. It also found that about three of every four teen smokers continue into adulthood.

Rockland is taking action, Paul said, in the current absence of federal and state laws.

The amendments to Rockland's existing law change the definition of "smoking" and "smoke" to include electronic cigarettes. The existing law seeks to prevent exposure to second-hand smoke and sets rules for where smoking is regulated, addressing private cars carrying children, multiple-unit dwellings, and government and private job sites, among other places.

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