



Building a Healthy Boston

CLINICAL ADVISORY

Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Cases of Unexplained Vaping-Associated Pulmonary Illness and Proposed Changes to Tobacco and Nicotine Product Sales Regulations in Boston

September 20, 2019

OVERVIEW

As of September 19, 2019, at 12PM, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports identifying 530 probable or confirmed cases of severe pulmonary disease associated with electronic cigarette product use (vaping) in 38 states and one U.S. territory. Seven deaths in six states have been confirmed. More than 70% of cases identify as male and two-thirds are between the ages of 18 and 34 years old. All cases have reported a history of e-cigarette product use or vaping. Cases have reported a history of using e-cigarette products containing THC and/or nicotine. No specific e-cigarette product (devices, liquids, refill pods, and/or cartridges) has been linked to all cases so far and epidemiological investigations continue. No evidence of infectious diseases has been identified. [Click here for current information from the CDC.](#)

SURVEILLANCE AND REPORTING

CDC, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, state and local health departments and other clinical and public health partners are investigating a multistate outbreak of lung disease associated with e-cigarette product use. On September 11, 2019, these cases were [declared reportable](#) to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH). The Massachusetts case definition is: a person experiencing otherwise unexplained progressive symptoms of shortness of breath, fatigue, chest pain, cough, and weight loss, of any severity, and an abnormal chest imaging study, associated with vaping in the past 90 days. MDPH has received dozens of reports of suspected cases, including cases in young people. **Healthcare providers are required to report any suspected cases to MDPH using the [PDF-fillable form found here.](#)**

PROPOSED MODIFICATION TO BOSTON TOBACCO REGULATIONS

On September 18, 2019, the BPHC Board of Health proposed an amendment to the City's tobacco regulations. This amendment would:

- (1) treat mint and menthol tobacco products the same as other flavors thereby restricting their sales to adult-only retailers and
- (2) increase accountability and youth access restrictions for 21+ adult-only shops by strengthening front door retailer ID checking requirements and restricting the sale of products that attract young people.

[The proposed amendment is posted online here.](#) Public comments are welcome and can be emailed to boardofhealth@bphc.org through November 8, 2019. A public hearing will take place at BPHC on November 7.

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