



**CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES  
DEPARTMENT FOR PUBLIC HEALTH**

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Governor

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**Adam M. Meier**  
Secretary

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Dear Healthcare Provider:

The Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH) is alerting clinicians about the possibility of seeing patients with progressive, severe pulmonary disease related to the use of e-cigarettes or “vaping.” As of August 27, at least 215 possible cases in 25 states have been reported to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). One death has been reported in Illinois. These pulmonary injuries are particularly seen among adolescents and young adults. Patients are experiencing respiratory symptoms including cough, shortness of breath, and fatigue, and symptoms typically worsen over a period of days or weeks before admission to the hospital. Other symptoms reported by some patients included fever, anorexia, pleuritic chest pain, nausea, and diarrhea. Chest radiographs show bilateral opacities, typically in the lower lobes, and CT imaging of the chest show diffuse ground-glass opacities, often with subpleural sparing. Evaluation for infectious etiologies was negative in all patients. Some patients experience progressive respiratory compromise requiring endotracheal intubation. Patients have improved with systemic steroids.

All patients reported vaping in the weeks and months prior to hospital admission. The names and types of products remain unknown. The products consumed could include a number of substances, such as nicotine, THC, synthetic cannabinoids, or a combination of these. Clinicians are encouraged to remain alert for potential cases among persons presenting with progressive respiratory symptoms who report a history of inhalation drug use, particularly vaping.

Clinicians who become aware of cases similar to those described above are asked to report them to KDPH. All potential cases should be reported on the EPID 200 reportable disease form and submitted via secure fax at: 502-696-3803. The illness name can be listed as, “Vaping - Lung Injury.”

If vaping fluid and devices commonly used by the patient are available at the patient visit, please collect and retain these for possible testing.

For questions, please contact Lara Daniels in the Kentucky Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program at 502-564-9358 ext. 4020 during business hours or after-hours at 888-9-REPORT (888-973-7678).

Thank you for your assistance in this urgent public health matter!

Doug Thoroughman, PhD, MS  
Acting Kentucky State Epidemiologist

