



HEALTH ALERT: August 16, 2019 - Severe Lung Disease Among Persons Who Report Vaping

Background: The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is investigating suspected cases of pulmonary disease among individuals who report vaping. Similar cases have occurred in multiple other states, some resulting in hospitalization. All suspect cases reported vaping with products including nicotine and/or tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). Evaluation for infectious diseases was negative in all patients.

DSHS is working with other states and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to better characterize case demographics, clinical characteristics, and exposures.

Clinical Presentation: Individuals experienced respiratory symptoms including cough, shortness of breath, and fatigue. Some also experienced nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Symptoms worsened over a period of days or weeks before admission to the hospital. Illness severity has varied, and in some cases, severe lung disease has been reported.

On imaging, chest radiographs have demonstrated bilateral opacification, and CT imaging has demonstrated diffuse ground glass opacification.

Recommendations for Clinicians

Health care providers should:

- Ask patients presenting with respiratory symptoms about vaping history. If possible, inquire about the types of products used and methods of use.
- If vaping fluid commonly used by the patient is available, ask that it be set aside (not used) in case it is needed for testing.
- Be aware that some suspect cases have required high-level intensive care and respiratory support.

Suspected cases should be reported to the Texas Department of State Health Services at 512-776-7268.

Suspected cases include those with inhalation drug use* within 90 days prior to symptom onset **AND** clinical signs and symptoms** of respiratory dysfunction.

* Includes vaping or smoking of any plant or chemical, including nicotine, marijuana, THC concentrate, CBD, synthetic cannabinoids, or other.

** Includes shortness of breath, pleuritic chest pain (i.e., pain with inspiration), cough with or without hemoptysis, hypoxia (pulse oximetry $\leq 95\%$), with or without fever.

Recommendations for the Public: People who experience difficulty breathing, cough, or other symptoms in the days or months after vaping should seek immediate medical attention

If you have questions regarding this notification, please contact El Paso Health Provider Relations at 915-532-3778 ext. 1507, Monday thru Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



For More Information: DSHS Environmental Surveillance and Toxicology Branch, 512-776-7268

epitox@dshs.texas.gov

Get the facts about electronic cigarettes: www.dshs.texas.gov/tobacco/E-Cigarettes/

Information for health care providers on adolescents and E-cigarette use:
www.txhealthsteps.com/static/courses/escape-the-vape/sections/section-1-1.html

As a reminder, screening and basic information about tobacco cessation is an expected part of any routine visit with a health care provider. Additional services or supports are available through Medicaid & CHIP.

Tobacco Cessation Benefits in Medicaid

Medicaid provides tobacco cessation counseling (procedure code 99406 & 99407) in individual and group settings to members 10 years and older with a diagnosis of nicotine dependence.

Adolescents with a nicotine dependency diagnosis related to aerosolized nicotine delivered by vape device are eligible for tobacco cessation counseling.

The Medicaid formulary includes select medications and nicotine replacement products to support tobacco cessation.

Contact your health plan about additional supports that may be offered as a value added service.

Tobacco Cessation Benefits in CHIP

Tobacco Cessation Programs

A health plan-approved tobacco cessation program is covered up to a \$100 limit per 12-month coverage period. Tobacco cessation program services are for a 12-month coverage period. The health plan may require prior authorization and use of a formulary.

CHIP Perinatal Program:

- Tobacco cessation programs are not a covered benefit for the unborn child.
- Coverage for the CHIP Perinatal newborn is the same as coverage for traditional CHIP clients

The CHIP formulary includes select medications to support tobacco cessation.

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