



February 22, 2024

Councilmember Kathy Stewart  
Chair, Committee on Parks, Trails, and the Environment  
Dallas City Hall  
1500 Marilla St.  
Dallas, Texas 75201

RE: Public Health Impact – Electronic Cigarettes

Dear Honorable Chair Stewart and Members of the Parks, Trails, and the Environment Committee:

Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) commends the City of Dallas for its 100% smoke-free ordinance, restricting smoking in particular settings. As a continuation of the City's commitment to public health, DCHHS recommends the City of Dallas create a comprehensive indoor and outdoor tobacco-free environment with the inclusion of electronic nicotine delivery systems in the definition of smoking. Adopting comprehensive tobacco-free policies has proven to be an effective strategy in reducing tobacco-related illnesses and creating healthier communities.

The mission of DCHHS is to optimize and protect the health and well-being of all Dallas County residents and support the achievement of better health outcomes for all. DCHHS strives to prevent chronic diseases and reduce health inequities by addressing environments, systems, and behaviors that are associated with chronic diseases and precursors. DCHHS understands that "tobacco dependence is a chronic, relapsing disorder that, like other chronic diseases, often requires repeated intervention and long-term support."<sup>1</sup> Therefore, DCHHS is committed to providing tobacco and vaping prevention education, cessation resources and support for tobacco-free policies for its residents and recommends e-cigarettes and other electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) be included in definitions of tobacco use.

Tobacco use is the primary cause of preventable disease, death, and disability— affecting not only individual health but also placing a substantial burden on our healthcare system.<sup>2</sup> Despite potentially lower toxicity in e-cigarette aerosols compared to traditional combustible tobacco products, they are still harmful, and the long-term consequences of ENDS use, and their aerosol exposure are unclear and under ongoing research. Toxic additives in e-liquids and vapor, along with the appeal of many fruit and menthol flavored products to youth, pose significant risks, especially as brain development continues until around the age of 25.<sup>3,4,8,9</sup>

We made great progress in the decline of youth use of conventional combustible cigarettes, but since the introduction of e-cigarettes to the US market in 2006, there has been a renormalization of tobacco use among youth largely due to e-cigarettes. E-cigarettes have been the dominant tobacco product used among youth since 2014. In Texas in 2021, about 18% of youth, grades 6-12, have ever used e-cigarettes and almost 9% have used them in the last month.<sup>3,9</sup> Nationally and



in Texas, adult use of e-cigarettes has also continued to increase. This can likely be attributed to the rising prevalence of e-cigarette usage within the 18-24 age demographic.<sup>5</sup> In 2021, 5.6% of the adult population living in Dallas County currently used ENDS.<sup>6</sup>

As research shows the effectiveness of comprehensive tobacco control policies, jurisdictions across the nation and in Texas are becoming 100% smoke and tobacco-free and including ENDS in their definition of smoking and tobacco use. Examples are Austin, Ft. Worth, Houston, and Plano.<sup>10</sup> Efforts aimed at preventing youth access to and usage of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, are also instrumental in diminishing rates of youth tobacco consumption. All such actions have the potential to play an important role in reducing future rates of adult tobacco product use.<sup>4</sup>

DCHHS recommends that the City of Dallas take further action to eliminate tobacco use, including aerosol exposure both indoors and outdoors, to decrease the risk of exacerbating chronic diseases and to reduce tobacco-related deaths. Tobacco-related deaths in Dallas County, mostly from lung cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, have continued to decrease since 2020—the current City of Dallas smoking ordinance is likely one contributing factor—and we would like this trend to continue.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philip Huang".

**Philip Huang, MD, MPH**  
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Dallas County Health and Human Services  
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Sources:

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2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023, November 2). Smoking and Tobacco Use Fast Facts and Fact Sheets. [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/fast\\_facts/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/fast_facts/index.htm)
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023, August 31). Office on Smoking and Health At A Glance. <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/aag/tobacco-use.htm#:~:text=Every%20day%20in%20the%20United,end%20up%20smoking%20cigarettes%20daily.>
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Kramarow EA, Elgaddal N. Current electronic cigarette use among adults aged 18 and over: United States, 2021. NCHS Data Brief, no 475. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2023. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.15620/cdc:129966>.
6. Prevalence of Electronic Nicotine Delivery System (ENDS) Use Among Adults, by Demographic Characteristics, Risk Factors / Comorbid Conditions, Place of Residence, and Self-Reported Health Status, Texas, 2021. Prepared by Chronic Disease Epidemiology Branch, Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Section, Texas Department of State Health Services.
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8. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults. A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2016.
9. Texas Health and Human Services – Texas Department of State Health Services. (January 2023). 2023 Electronic Cigarette (E-Cigarette) Report. Retrieved from [https://www.dshs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/2023-Electronic-Cigarette-E-Cigarette-Report\\_12.14.22.pdf](https://www.dshs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/2023-Electronic-Cigarette-E-Cigarette-Report_12.14.22.pdf).
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Feb 26, 2024

Mayor Johnson and Dallas City Council,

As community organizations dedicated to improving the health and quality of life for all in Dallas, we are writing to voice our strong support for the City of Dallas updating its smoking ordinance to ban vaping indoors and in public parks.

The aerosol emitted by electronic smoking devices is **not** water vapor. The aerosol is a mixture of many substances, including nicotine, ultrafine particles, volatile organic compounds, and toxins known to cause lung disease and cancer. This is why it is not safe to use these products in smoke-free spaces, like workplaces.

**No workers in Dallas should be exposed to secondhand aerosol and put their health at risk to earn a paycheck.**

Secondhand aerosol is **not** harmless. Non-smokers who are exposed to conventional cigarette smoke and ESD aerosol absorb similar levels of nicotine. ESD exposure damages lung tissues. Exposure to the fine and ultrafine particles may exacerbate respiratory ailments like asthma and constrict arteries which could trigger a heart attack. Simply put, ESD aerosol is a new source of air pollution and toxins that should not be permitted in smoke-free environments.

Over 90 Texas cities including Ft. Worth, Garland, Irving, Denton, Waco, Austin, Houston, El Paso, and McAllen have smoke-free ordinances that include e-cigarettes, and several major cities including Austin, San Antonio, and Dallas also prohibit smoking or vaping in public parks. We hope Dallas will be the next Texas city to add electronic smoking devices (ESDs) or “vaping” products to your smoking ordinance to protect our community and public spaces from dangerous exposure to secondhand aerosol.

Your leadership will improve the health and quality of life for everyone in Dallas.

Sincerely,

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

American Heart Association

American Lung Association in Texas

Americans for Nonsmokers’ Rights

Sam Susser, Chairman & CEO, Susser Bank

Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids

Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council

Texas Academy of Family Physicians

The Cooper Institute

Dallas County Medical Society