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**PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY**

October 28, 2019

SHAN 10-003 **Contact:** 707-784-8005 or 707-784-8001, [SolanoEpi@SolanoCounty.com](mailto:SolanoEpi@SolanoCounty.com)

**To: Solano County Healthcare Providers**  
**From: Solano County Public Health**

**Interim Guidance for Health Care Providers Evaluating and Caring for Patients with Suspected E-cigarette, or Vaping, Product Use Associated Lung Injury (EVALI)**

**ACTIONS FOR PROVIDERS:**

1. **Ask** patients presenting with respiratory complaints in both outpatient and inpatient settings about their use of vaping or “dabbing”\* devices, especially patients who had an initial diagnosis of pneumonia or bronchitis that did not respond to antibiotics. For patients who do vape, ask these follow-up questions:
  - **Type of vape used**
    - Do you vape nicotine-containing substances?
    - Do you vape substances that contain cannabis or cannabinoid compounds like THC and CBD?
  - **Amount of use**
    - When was the last time you vaped?
    - How often do you vape?
    - How long have you been vaping?
  - **Source**
    - Where do you purchase your vaping supplies?
    - What brands are your vaping devices, cartridges, and oils?
  
2. **Call** and report suspected cases within one business day to Solano County Public Health at 707-784-8001 (during business hours) or at 707-784-8005 (after hours).

\* Includes using an electronic device (e.g., electronic nicotine delivery system (ENDS), electronic cigarette, e-cigarette, vaporizer, vape(s), vape pen, dab pen, or other) or dabbing to inhale substances (e.g., nicotine, marijuana, THC, THC concentrates, CBD, synthetic cannabinoids, flavorings, or other substances).

As of October 15, 2019, 1,479 lung injury cases associated with the use of e-cigarette, or vaping, products have been reported to CDC from 49 states (all except Alaska), the District of Columbia, and 1 U.S. territory. Thirty-three deaths have been confirmed in 24 states, and all patients have reported a history of using e-cigarette, or vaping, products. Since June 2019, CDPH has received reports that 102 people who use e-cigarettes or vaping devices were



hospitalized for severe breathing problems and lung damage, and two people have died. Solano Public Health has received one confirmed report of EVALI that resulted in hospitalization.

No single compound or ingredient has emerged as the cause of these injuries to date, and there might be more than one cause. While available data suggest tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)-containing products play a role in this outbreak, nicotine-containing products cannot be excluded as a possible cause. The specific chemical(s) responsible for EVALI have not yet been identified.

On October 11, 2019, CDC provided interim guidance for 1) initial clinical evaluation; 2) suggested criteria for hospital admission and treatment; 3) patient follow-up; 4) special considerations for groups at high risk; and 5) clinical and public health recommendations. Health care providers evaluating patients suspected to have EVALI should ask about the use of e-cigarette, or vaping, products in a nonjudgmental and thorough manner.

Clinical evaluation for patients suspected to have EVALI should include the following:

- Chest radiograph (CXR); consider chest computed tomography for evaluation of severe or worsening disease, complications, other illnesses, or when CXR does not correlate with clinical findings
- Evaluation for infectious disease (including influenza testing and a respiratory viral panel)
- Urine toxicology testing (including testing for THC) with informed consent
- CDPH is asking that blood, urine, and BAL specimens obtained from patients during the course of evaluation for vaping associated pulmonary injury be saved for possible future analysis by CDPH or CDC.

Hospital admission is recommended for patients who have decreased blood oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>) saturation (<95%) on room air, who are in respiratory distress, or who have comorbidities that compromise pulmonary reserve. Health care providers should consider empiric use of a combination of antibiotics, antivirals, or steroids based upon clinical context. More information is available in the linked CDC documents at the end of this health alert. At this time, EVALI is considered a diagnosis of exclusion because no specific test or marker exists for its diagnosis.

CDC recommends that providers strongly advise patients to discontinue the use of e-cigarette, or vaping, products, offer evidence-based tobacco product cessation strategies, emphasize the importance of routine influenza vaccination, and consider pneumococcal vaccination.

For more information visit: the following websites for CDPH and CDC:

- CDPH Health Advisory:  
[https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/LCP/CDPH%20Document%20Library/VAPI\\_HCP\\_Advisory\\_Oct12019.pdf#search=Vaping%20associated%20pulmonary%20injury](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/LCP/CDPH%20Document%20Library/VAPI_HCP_Advisory_Oct12019.pdf#search=Vaping%20associated%20pulmonary%20injury)
- CDC outbreak information:  
[https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease.html](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease.html)
- CDC interim guidance:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6841e3.htm>