

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



California Chapter 2 – the Los Angeles County, Central Coast and Inland Empire Chapter

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AAP-CA Chapter 2

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March 21, 2019

Hon. David Ryu

Committee on Health, Education, Neighborhoods, Parks, Arts, and River
200 N. Main Spring Street, Room 1060
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Banning All Flavored Tobacco Products in Los Angeles

Dear Councilmember Ryu,

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is a professional organization of nearly 70,000 pediatricians in the U.S. We are a trusted source of information on children's health for patients, parents and policymakers. As president of the Southern California chapter of the AAP, I represent over 1500 pediatricians in seven counties. I am writing to express my deep concern about the impact of tobacco flavor on youth smoking.

In December 2018, U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams declared an "epidemic" of teenage vaping. National datasets reveal that the percentage of 12th graders who had vaped in the last 30 days nearly doubled, from 11% in 2017 to 21% in 2018. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported in February 2019 that 21% of high school and 5% of middle school students are current users of e-cigarettes.

E-cigarettes are being marketed directly to children by promoting flavors. About 70% of middle and high school students who use a tobacco product have used a flavored product. Companies like Juul are using a wide variety of media channels and approaches previously used with success by the tobacco industry to market conventional tobacco products to youth. E-cigarette advertising has effectively reached youth and young adults and is associated with current e-cigarette use.

The increasing use of e-cigarettes among youth threatens five decades of public health gains in successfully deglamorizing, restricting, and decreasing the use of tobacco products. In addition, numerous toxicants and carcinogens have been found in e-cigarette solutions. Finally, adolescents and young adults who use e-cigarettes are at high risk of transitioning to traditional cigarettes, which can increase cardiovascular and cancer risk and chronic illnesses such as asthma.

To prevent children, adolescents, and young adults from transitioning from e-cigarettes to traditional cigarettes and to minimize the potential public health

harm from e-cigarette use, there is a critical need for e-cigarette regulation, legislative action, and counterpromotion to help youth live tobacco-free lives. I urge you to support a ban on all flavored tobacco products in the city of Los Angeles. By doing so, you will be setting an example for the surrounding municipalities and eventually the state of California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AK', written in a cursive style.

Alice Kuo, MD, PhD, MBA, FAAP
President, Southern California Chapter