

Vaping is an epidemic and the FDA must act, physicians say

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The nation's physicians sent a strong message on "the urgent public health epidemic" of the skyrocketing use of e-cigarettes and called on the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to take action to address it.

Under the Family Smoking Prevention And Tobacco Control Act, the FDA has authority to regulate all tobacco products. This also includes electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) such as e-cigarettes.

Research has shown that the use of e-cigarettes and vaping products is unsafe and can cause addiction, according to data cited in a resolution presented by the AMA Organized Medical Staff Section.

To address the issue, the AMA House of Delegates directed the AMA to:

- Recognize the use of e-cigarettes and vaping as an urgent public health epidemic.
- Actively work with the Food and Drug Administration and other relevant stakeholders to counteract the marketing and use of addictive e-cigarette and vaping devices, including but not limited to bans and strict restrictions on marketing to minors under the age of 21.

"The AMA is committed to keeping harmful tobacco products out of the hands of young people and we will continue to urge the FDA to ban flavors, as well as marketing practices, that enhance the appeal of these products to youth," said Albert J. Osbahr, III, MD, a member of the AMA Board of Trustees. "We believe more stringent policies will help protect our nation's youth from the harmful effects of tobacco use."

Many teenagers and young adults report that ENDS flavors are a compelling reason why they try—and then continue to use—these products.

In an effort to help stem this rising tide of vaping, delegates amended AMA policy to "encourage the FDA to prohibit the use of flavoring agents in tobacco products, which includes ENDS."

News outlets have reported that the FDA plans to restrict the sale of most flavored e-cigarettes in retail stores and gas stations, with the plans expected to be announced soon.