

July 1, 2020

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To Whom It May Concern:

The rise of hospitalizations and deaths stemming from the use of tobacco products, including vaping and e-cigarettes, is creating a national health crisis. As a healthcare district whose mission is to heal, comfort and promote health in the communities we serve, it is our responsibility to be stewards of good health and support an end to this epidemic.

It is staggering to know that as of January 21, 2020, more than 2,700 people have been hospitalized and 60 have died from using vape products nationwide. More troubling is that vaping disproportionately affects teens, who are seven times more likely to vape than adults.

Palomar Health has seen similar results compared to the rest of the nation. Although the purchase of tobacco and vaping products is illegal for anyone under 21 years of age, in the last two years alone we have seen a five-fold increase in patients under 21 who have reported using tobacco, which includes vaping and e-cigarettes.

While we still don't know what long-term health effects vaping will have, health experts including Palomar Health Pulmonologist Greg Hirsch, MD, say inhaling the chemicals created during the vaping process are more dangerous than inhaling smoke from a standard cigarette which both have significant negative side effects on the part of the brain that controls attention, learning, mood and impulse control.

As an organization serving half a million residents in North San Diego County, it is our duty to educate the public about the dangers of using tobacco and vaping, and support causes that end easy and unregulated access to harmful products, especially those targeting children.

Please strongly consider how we can work together to institute more tobacco control and put an end this health crisis. It is our obligation to make our communities healthier and not allow harmful products to reach our youth. As an organization, we support actions that would limit access to all tobacco products and are committed to helping end this epidemic.

Sincerely,
Palomar Health Board of Directors