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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Barnstable County urges awareness of danger of e-cigarettes to youth

BARNSTABLE (MA) December 20, 2018 - The Barnstable County Department of Health and Environment strongly urges the citizens of Barnstable County to be aware of the dangers of e-cigarette use by children and young people. A surge in vaping is giving rise to nicotine addiction in youth.

The US Surgeon General has issued [an advisory](#) describing the use of e-cigarettes by youth as an epidemic. The advisory states that “In 2018, more than 3.6 million U.S. youth, including 1 in 5 high school students and 1 in 20 middle school students, currently use e-cigarettes.”

The Surgeon General urges aggressive steps to protect children from these highly potent products that risk exposing a new generation of young people to nicotine. He calls for aligning and coordinating efforts at the national, state, county, and local levels.

Sean O'Brien, Director of the Barnstable County Department of Health and Environment, says, “This department supports the Surgeon General’s advisory. This is not only a national problem, it is a Cape Cod problem as well. The Cape Cod Regional Tobacco Control Program (CCRTCP) can provide assistance and information to anyone who has questions about vaping and other nicotine delivery products.”

Supported through a state grant administered by the Barnstable County Department of Health and Environment, the CCRTCP provides education and enforcement services to collaborative member towns, including Cape Cod’s 15 towns, Martha’s Vineyard, Nantucket and Wareham.

CCRTCP Director Robert Collett says, “Everyone can play an important role in protecting young people from the risks of e-cigarettes. Parents should be vigilant in their efforts to learn how their children feel about vaping, and if they are vaping themselves.”

It is important to emphasize that vaping nicotine is not a harmless practice. According to the Surgeon General, nicotine exposure during adolescence can harm the developing brain—which continues to develop until about age 25—and impact learning, memory and attention. Using nicotine in adolescence can also increase risk for future addiction to other drugs.

In addition to the risks above, Collett says, “The data show that the youth who are using these products are likely to turn to combustible tobacco products after becoming addicted to e-cigarettes. Don’t assume your kids aren’t using it. This is an epidemic and even the top student leaders are attracted to the devices.”

For information or assistance on the issue of vaping or other tobacco related issues, visit the Massachusetts Department of Public Health’s website <http://www.makesmokinghistory.org/> or call the CCRTCP at 508-375-6621.

More information from the Surgeon General on teen vaping is [available here](#).

Use the following links to learn more:

[Campaign for tobacco free kids](#)

[CDC Quick Facts on the Risks of E-cigarettes for Kids, Teens, and Young Adults](#)

[National Institutes for Health Teens and E-cigarettes Infographic](#)

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Editors: Bob Collett is available for radio/print/TV interviews. Please call him directly at 508-737-8459