



News Release

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New Public Education Campaign Targets Deadly Outbreak of Vaping-Related Illness

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has launched a new advertising campaign called *Outbreak* which targets young adults and parents. The ads address the outbreak of vaping related lung illnesses and the growing teen vaping epidemic. The public education advertising campaign is part of an [Executive Order](#) by Governor Newsom. California is the first state in the nation to launch a media campaign in response to this deadly outbreak. *Outbreak* is Phase 1 of a multi-part media campaign addressing vaping. Phase 2 will rollout in January 2020 with a continued focus on youth vaping.

“The outbreak of vaping related illnesses has elevated the urgency in addressing youth vaping as a health epidemic,” said Governor Newsom. “This campaign takes immediate action to inform Californians about the serious health risks associated with vaping and builds upon the work to reduce vaping among youth. I share the concerns of many other parents about the dangers vaping poses to the health and well-being of our kids.”

Outbreak aims to jolt young adults ages 19-29, and parents of middle school and high school students, by drawing attention to the health risks of vaping and this new outbreak of vaping related lung illnesses. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 1,600 cases of vaping-related illness in 49 states have been reported, along with 34 deaths. Three of those deaths were in California. The ads will run parallel to CDPH’s “Flavors Hook Kids” campaign already underway across California.

“E-cigarettes and vaping are not proven to be safe and are dangerous for youth,” said Dr. Sonia Angell, State Public Health Officer and CDPH Director. “California’s data on this outbreak shows that vaping products containing THC, particularly those obtained off the street or from other informal sources, are linked to most of our cases, but we are still investigating. During this time in particular, CDPH urges everyone to refrain from vaping.”

Young Californians are being impacted the most by this outbreak, with the youngest 14 years old. Numerous cases of this outbreak involve youth under age 18. Since June, CDPH has received more than 138 reports of vaping-related lung illness in the state, all

requiring hospitalization and many requiring life support interventions. The median age of California's victims is 27. While refraining from vaping is strongly recommended until the investigation is complete, for those who choose to vape, it is imperative that products only be purchased from a licensed retailer. Do not buy vaping products on the street. Additionally, consumers should never modify a store-bought vape product.

"This outbreak of lung illnesses related to vaping is very serious, and the number of cases continues to climb," said California Health and Human Services Agency Secretary, Dr. Mark Ghaly. "As a pediatrician, it's critical that my colleagues, and all medical professionals, have very direct conversations with parents and their patients about tobacco, THC, other cannabis products and vape use."

Outbreak includes TV, digital, and radio spots, running in 14 markets across California, including Los Angeles, San Francisco, Fresno, San Diego and Sacramento. For more information about the dangers of e-cigarettes and vaping devices, symptoms of the vaping-related lung illness and where to find help, young adults should visit [VapeOutbreak](#) and parents should go to [FlavorsHookKids](#).

The [first TV spot for young adults](#) shows seemingly carefree lives involving vaping juxtaposed with startling color footage of real patients hospitalized with lung illness. The [second TV spot for parents](#) presents dramatic visuals of the deadly outbreak of the vaping-related illness. The TV spot for parents will be released in Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese and Korean, in November and December.

Vaping devices are the most commonly used tobacco product in California and 86 percent of high school teens who consume tobacco use a vaping device. Of the California teens who consume tobacco products, nearly 90 percent report using a flavored vaping product. Nationwide, cannabis vaping among youth has increased by 58 percent in a single year. From 2016 to 2018, vaping among California high school students rose 27 percent.

Visit [CDPH's website](#) for more information on the dangers of vaping.