



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**GOVERNOR IGE SIGNS CLEAN AIR BILL, BANNING USE OF E-CIGARETTES  
WHERE SMOKING IS PROHIBITED**

HONOLULU – The Department of Health applauds Governor Ige, members of the legislature, and partners statewide for passing and signing Act 19 (HB 940), which restricts the use of electronic smoking devices, or e-cigarettes, in all locations where smoking is illegal. Act 19 upholds the protections created by Hawaii’s very successful Smoke-Free Workplace and Public Places Law, enacted in 2006. The signing of this historic legislation makes Hawaii the fourth U.S. state to have passed such a bill, after North Dakota, New Jersey, and Utah.

The use of e-cigarettes in existing smoke-free locations has had the potential to expose non-smokers and vulnerable populations, such as children and pregnant women, to aerosolized nicotine and other toxic substances, which could be dangerous to one’s health. Studies have found that there is enormous variability among e-cigarette devices in terms of their design, operation, contents, and emissions of carcinogens, other toxicants, and nicotine.

“These products currently are not regulated and many of the hazardous components in cigarettes are also found in e-cigarette emissions,” said Director of Health Dr. Virginia Pressler. “Just as we found that smoking was dangerous after many years of unrestricted use, we could be unintentionally harming people as a result of not including e-cigarettes as part of our smoke-free laws.”

In a report issued this month on workplace tobacco policies, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health warns about the secondhand exposure to nicotine from e-cigarettes. Nicotine is addictive and toxic, and harmful even at low doses. It is an acute irritant, and capable of causing headache and nausea. For pregnant women, nicotine can transfer to and harm the developing fetus.

Smoke-free air laws were designed to protect the public from the dangers of nicotine and other harmful chemicals found in cigarettes. In addition to potential health consequences, e-cigarette use undermines compliance with these same smoke-free laws by reversing the progress made in establishing a social norm that smoking is not permitted in public spaces.

“The erosion of Hawaii’s smoke-free legislation is evident when looking at e-cigarette use among our youth,” said Lola Irvin, Manager of the Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Division. While tobacco use among Hawaii’s public middle and high school students has declined over the past decade, e-cigarette use has been increasing rapidly. In particular, lifetime e-cigarette use among high school students tripled from 5.1 percent in 2011 to 17.6 percent in 2013, and quadrupled among middle school students, from 1.8 percent to 7.9 percent, during the same time period.

Despite the fact that many e-cigarettes are marketed as smoking cessation devices, data has shown that e-cigarette users often do not quit smoking traditional cigarettes but instead become dual users. E-cigarettes are not approved smoking cessation devices. The Department of Health’s Hawaii Tobacco Quitline can provide approved cessation devices to Hawaii residents who are trying to quit smoking traditional or e-cigarettes. Residents can speak or chat with a quit coach free of charge by calling 1-800-QUIT NOW or by visiting [www.hawaiiquitline.org](http://www.hawaiiquitline.org).

For more information about tobacco prevention and control in Hawaii, go to:  
<http://health.hawaii.gov/tobacco/>.

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