



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RESTRICTS THE USE OF ELECTRONIC SMOKING DEVICES ON DOH PROPERTIES

HONOLULU -- The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) has issued a directive containing a policy to restrict the use of unregulated electronic smoking devices on DOH properties. The directive is the first of its kind among Hawaii state departments.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2014, the use of electronic smoking devices on all DOH properties, as well as premises occupied by DOH, is prohibited any place where smoking of tobacco products is not allowed by law. The policy applies to all DOH employees, visitors, volunteer, students, contract workers, delivery personnel, Department of Accounting and General Services workers, and all others who enter the work setting or environment which includes DOH and those premises occupied by DOH.

The unrestricted use of electronic smoking devices (such as electronic cigarettes, or "e-cigarettes") is potentially hazardous to health. "Using electronic smoking devices threatens our smoke-free laws designed to protect the public from the harmful effects of tobacco and nicotine," said Lola Irvin, DOH Tobacco Settlement programs manager. "While electronic smoking devices are touted for being smoke-free, they have not been proven to be safe. These devices release nicotine and other chemicals and carcinogens into the environment, leaving those around them exposed to the potentially harmful vapor—just like second-hand smoke. Electronic smoking devices also confuse the public who expect a smoke-free environment and erode the strong belief in our Hawaii Smoke-Free Workplace and Public Places Law."

Electronic smoking devices are used by inhaling vaporized liquid nicotine created by heat through an electronic ignition system. This simulates cigarette smoking, thereby reversing the progress that has been made in establishing a social norm that smoking is not permitted in public places and places of employment.

The electronic smoking device policy was one of the last policies signed by the late Director of Health Loretta J. Fuddy, who passed away last Wednesday after the plane she was on was forced to make a water landing after taking off from Kalaupapa, Molokai. “Director Fuddy believed that as the Department of Health, it is our responsibility to set the standard for health for the people of Hawaii,” said Irvin. “Today, we are taking a stand to protect our workers and our public. We hope to inspire others to take a similar position and join us in carrying out her legacy.”

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