

HB 134 Flavored Tobacco Products - Prohibition

SUPPORT House Economic Matters Committee 2-10-2021

Nishant Shah, MD, MPH

MDDCSAM is a chapter of the American Society of Addiction Medicine whose members are physicians and other health providers who treat people with substance use disorders.

I am writing to support HB 134 to prohibit the sale of flavored tobacco and vaping products in the State of Maryland. Maryland will be joining 8 other states that have already banned flavored e-cigarette, and will lead the nation in banning all flavored nicotine products, including menthol flavored cigarettes. Federal law banned the majority of flavored cigarettes in 2009, and many cities and counties have banned all flavored tobacco products, similar to the proposed legislation.

Flavored tobacco products have been historically used to entice youth and non-smokers to try tobacco products. Flavored vaping products have followed a similar form of enticement, especially for youth smokers. In the State of Maryland, 13% of high school students have used a vaping product¹. Vaping products marketed as “juice pods” and in flavors titled “Pineapple Crush, Bubble Gum, and Mango” are products intentionally designed to target youth. In addition to flavored products, youth are targeted through promotional advertising in store windows, sports event sponsorship, and social media marketing campaigns.

In addition, vaping products deliver more concentrated amounts of nicotine to youth in higher volumes. As a result, youth are at higher risk of developing dependence on nicotine. Nicotine dependence with e-cigarettes is associated with a higher rate of cigarette smoking in the future².

Youth smoking is the strongest predictor of adult smoking; nearly 90% of adult smokers started smoking before the age of 18³. It is therefore essential to limit youth exposure to nicotine products if we are going to reduce the number of adults smoking.

Finally, smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, contributing to increased rates of cancer, heart attacks, and strokes. Our goal to improve health outcomes for Marylanders is dependent on helping people quit smoking, this bill will limit access to the products that will create the next generation of Maryland smokers.

As Health professionals tasked with addressing the needs of individuals with substance use disorders, the Maryland DC Society of Addiction Medicine supports the passage of HB 134.

¹ Source NYTS 2018. Accessed January 28, 2020. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/maryland>

² Barrington-Trimis JL et al. “E-cigarettes and future cigarette use.” *Pediatrics*, July 2016

³ CDC. Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General. 2012 and CDC. E-Cigarette use among youth and young adults: A Report of the Surgeon General. 2016
