

US lawmakers: No e-cigarette sales or ads to youths

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US lawmakers want electronic cigarettes to be treated just like tobacco products when it comes to barring the sales and marketing of the controversial devices to children.

Senate and House Democrats said Monday that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the agency responsible for protecting public health in the United States, has the legislative authority it needs to step in.

The FDA is expected to issue regulations on e-cigarettes later this year, but whether or not an advertising ban or sales restrictions to youths will be included is unclear.

"Federal laws and regulations prohibit traditional cigarettes from being sold to persons younger than 18 years of age, distributed as free samples, advertised on television and radio, and having characterizing candy and fruit flavors that appeal to children," eleven lawmakers said in their report entitled "Gateway to Addiction?"

"There is no federal ban on the use of such tactics by e-cigarette manufacturers."

E-cigarettes are battery-operated devices that deliver nicotine that is vaporized into an aerosol inhaled by the user.

The report found that of the nation's nine manufacturers of e-

cigarettes—which are marketed under various names including vape pipes or e-hookahs—six sell flavors such as Cherry Crush or Chocolate Treat that could appeal to children.

Most also have provided free samples at hundreds of events, including youth-oriented concerts, while seven of the companies broadcast TV or radio advertising.

One company, NJOY, advertised during the Super Bowl, one of the most-watched televised events in the United States.

Swift FDA action "is necessary to ensure that e-cigarette manufacturers stop targeting kids," Senator Dick Durbin, who spearheaded the restrictions push along with congressman Henry Waxman, told reporters.

Waxman said the FDA should issue regulations that deem e-cigarettes the same as conventional [tobacco products](#) in order to close a regulations loophole.

"Manufacturers are taking advantage of the absence of federal e-cigarette regulations to aggressively market their products," he said.

The industry insists e-cigarettes help smokers kick their habit, but Durbin dismisses that argument, saying they "lure children" into nicotine addiction.

E-cigarette use among young people is soaring.

A December study by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that 10 percent of [high school students](#) had used e-cigarettes.

The lawmakers estimated e-cigarette sales neared \$2 billion in 2013.

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