

Ban flavoring, ads for E-cigarettes, doctors' group says

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Backers of the devices say bans would destroy the market, may drive some smokers back to cigarettes.

(HealthDay)—The U.S. Food and Drug Administration should ban flavorings and television ads for e-cigarettes, a prominent physicians' organization says.

There is scant evidence that e-cigarettes help people quit smoking, as claimed by manufacturers. And the chemicals used in these devices may be harmful to both smokers and bystanders, said Ryan Crowley, senior associate for health policy at the American College of Physicians (ACP).

"There are over 7,000 different flavorings in e-cigarettes, and the evidence shows that young people are attracted to these products because of the flavors," Crowley said. "There are also concerns that there are harmful chemicals in the flavorings themselves."

Crowley added that calling for a ban on TV ads for e-cigarettes follows ACP's continuing policy supporting bans on all tobacco advertising.

The organization also recommends taxing e-cigarettes and banning their use in both indoor and outdoor public areas, and urges more research on e-cigarettes.

The ACP's position paper on e-cigarettes was published April 21 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Several experts applauded the move.

"We strongly agree with the American College of Physicians that the FDA should act now to regulate e-cigarettes," said Vince Willmore, vice president of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids.

"The urgent need for action was underscored by the new CDC-FDA survey released last week that showed youth e-cigarette use tripled from 2013 to 2014, and surpassed use of traditional cigarettes," he said. "We can't allow the tobacco industry to addict our kids with a new generation of tobacco products."

Stanton Glantz, professor of tobacco control at the University of California, San Francisco, said, "These are sensible recommendations, particularly in light of the major jump in e-cigarette use by kids."

But Glantz said he doesn't hold out much hope that the FDA will regulate these products anytime soon.

"The practical responsibility for controlling e-cigarettes will rest with localities and states, who have the authority to include them in clean indoor air laws and tax them—two things that the FDA cannot do," he said.

The ACP joins a number of other organizations—including the American Medical Association, the American Heart Association, the American Association for Cancer Research, the American Society of Clinical Oncology and the U.S. Surgeon General—in urging the FDA to start regulating e-cigarettes.

E-cigarettes are growing in popularity, with global sales expected to surpass \$50 billion in the next 15 years, Crowley said.

The e-cigarette industry, however, sees the ACP's recommendations as overreaching.

"The ACP's policy recommendations read like a step-by-step guide to handing the vapor industry over to 'Big Tobacco' and making vaping a less effective alternative to smoking," said Gregory Conley, president of the American Vaping Association. "The ACP justifies this by cherry-picking studies that support its ideology, while ignoring many of those that do not."

Dr. Michael Siegel, a professor at Boston University School of Public Health, believes that e-cigarettes help people quit smoking, and regulation would destroy the e-cigarette industry.

"The problem with banning flavoring is that it would put an end to e-cigarettes, because they all have flavoring," he said. "These flavors are the primary reason that these products are so attractive to smokers who are trying to quit or cut down."

"More importantly," Siegel added, "it would have [negative health effects](#), because people who are using [e-cigarettes](#) may go back to smoking."

More information: Visit Smokefree.gov for more on e-cigarettes.

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