



## PUBLIC HEALTH

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**Douglas Beardsley, MPH**  
**Director**

*Promoting Health. Preventing Harm.*

### *Press Release*

**For Immediate Release**  
February 18, 2014

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## **Board of Health Adopts Position on E-Cigarettes**

Encourages Policies and Laws to Treat Electronic Cigarettes the Same as Tobacco

Iowa City, IA: The Johnson County Board of Health adopted a position statement which finds that electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) are addictive, contain harmful substances and are being targeted to youth. The statement encourages public and private policies, including legislation, that would place the same restrictions on e-cigarettes that are currently on tobacco cigarettes. (see full statement, attached below)

“The Board has been very interested in maintaining the gains that have been made in reducing tobacco use in Iowa.” Explains Doug Beardsley, Director of Johnson County Public Health. “The tobacco industry has not been idle. They are constantly developing and marketing new products, including e-cigarettes, to attract new young users. There is credible research and information to cause concern about e-cigarettes and the Board felt they should be proactive in studying this topic and making recommendations.”

Among the findings of most concern for the Board of Health are that e-cigarette vapor contains numerous toxic and carcinogenic substances and that young people and others who have never smoked cigarettes are taking up the habit thinking that it is harmless.

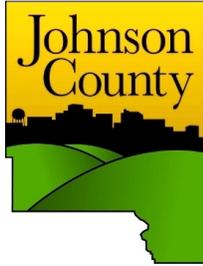
Studies on the contents of e-cigarette vapors reviewed by the Board found that the vapor contains toxic and carcinogenic compounds such as Benzene, Toluene, Acetone, Formaldehyde and fine particles among others. Other studies demonstrated that these substances are absorbed by non-users exposed to the vapors much like second-hand tobacco smoke.

The Board of Health’s statement encourages government bodies and businesses to include e-cigarettes in their indoor air policies the same as tobacco cigarettes and also recommends that State and local legislators include e-cigarettes in all applicable laws regulating tobacco cigarettes.

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### **Statement On Electronic Cigarettes**

Upon review of current available research and other scientific materials related to the use of and exposure to vapors produced by Electronic Cigarettes (EC), the Johnson County Board of Health finds the following:

- Electronic cigarettes (EC) refers to a class of devices which vaporize a solution of nicotine and other substances for inhalation by the user.
- Nicotine is an addictive substance and there is evidence to indicate that EC have similar addictive properties as tobacco cigarettes.
- The flavor additives, colors, packaging and promotional materials associated with EC are clearly targeted to appeal to youthful audiences.
- EC use does not appear to be primarily a replacement for smoking tobacco cigarettes among current smokers. EC are being used by current smokers, former smokers and non-smokers alike. Use of EC among sixth to 12<sup>th</sup> graders has doubled from 2011 to 2012.
- While there are anecdotal claims that EC can help a person quit smoking, EC have not been approved as a smoking cessation aid by the FDA and no EC manufacturers have applied for review for such designation under established FDA protocols.
- EC release numerous carcinogens, toxins, volatile organic compounds and ultrafine/fine particulate matter and contribute to the degradation of the indoor environment.
- Persons exposed to second-hand EC vapor absorb the components of the vapor at detectable levels.
- No brand of EC has been submitted to FDA to establish their safety. Given the variety of carcinogens and toxins in EC vapor, the health and safety of persons exposed to EC vapor, both primary and second-hand, is in question.

In light of these findings, the Johnson County Board of Health recommends the following actions:

1. That the Johnson County Board of Supervisors, City Councils within Johnson County, School Districts and other governmental bodies include EC in their policies related to tobacco cigarette use on property under their control;
2. That the owners of workplaces, restaurants or any other indoor or enclosed area to which the public is invited or in which the public is permitted, adopt policies prohibiting the use of EC in such enclosed or indoor public areas;
3. That the Iowa Legislature adopt legislation which, at a minimum:
  - a. restricts the purchase and use of EC to persons 18 years of age and older;
  - b. restricts the sale of EC to only vendors who hold a license to sell tobacco products;
  - c. include EC in areas where tobacco cigarette use is prohibited under the Iowa Smoke Free Air Act;
4. That, in the absence of action by the State Legislature and Governor to implement the recommendations in number 3, above, that the Johnson County Board of Supervisors and municipal governments in Johnson County explore adopting ordinances, to the full extent of their authority, to implement those recommendations.

Approved: February 18, 2014