



**Testimony in Support of LD 423
Submitted by Tina Pettingill, MPH
on behalf of the Maine Public Health Association**

Dear Representative Gattine, Senator Brakey, and distinguished members of the Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Tina Pettingill and I am the executive director of the Maine Public Health Association. MPHA is an organization that represents over 400 public health professionals across the state. We are a science-based association that only weighs in on bills when we have the data or evidence to support our testimony.

The use of electronic cigarettes and other e-devices to inhale nicotine products has exploded in the United States. One in five US smokers have tried e-cigarettes or its derivatives. E-cigarette use, commonly referred to as “vaping”, has created an over \$1 billion dollar industry in 2014 of selling devices and liquid nicotine. Liquid nicotine, commonly called e-liquid or e-juice is heated and inhaled by the user. E-liquid comes in an almost infinite number of flavors (about 8,000) such as crab legs, worcestershire sauce, pizza, and even the taste of conventional cigarettes. These bottles of e-liquid contain a high concentration of nicotine and are sold in a simple dropper bottle with no safety mechanisms in place to prevent accidental ingestion.

The health community is already aware of the side effects of nicotine poisoning: nausea and vomiting, headache, and all the way to seizures and death. The lethal dose of nicotine is between 1-13 mg per kg of bodyweight. By estimation, a teaspoon of only 1.8% liquid nicotine could be a fatal dose for a 200lb person. Most e-liquid nicotine levels range from 1.8% to 2.4%. This means the fatal dose for a child is very small and we know that one infant has already died after drinking liquid nicotine.

Due to the kid-friendly flavors and bright colors, we are concerned about the risk to children of possible ingestion. While child-resistant does not mean child-proof, the additional safety measure for liquid nicotine could make the difference between life and death. We have been lucky in our State to not suffer the loss of a child due to nicotine poisoning but the longer we continue to allow this product to be sold within the state without effective safety measures; it is just a matter of time.

Let's join the three states that have passed similar legislation (and many others who have introduced it) and put standards in place to protect children from this emerging public health threat. I urge you to send a strong message to the legislature and to the public by providing a unanimous “ought to pass” committee report. Thank you for your time.

MPHA 2014/2015
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