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**House Committee on Health and Human Services  
February 4, 2019**

Chairwoman Landwehr and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of electronic cigarette use. My name is Christi Nance, and I am the Policy Director for Oral Health Kansas (OHK). We are the statewide advocacy organization dedicated to promoting the importance of lifelong dental health so Kansans know all mouths matter.

Electronic cigarette use, commonly referred to as e-cigarettes or vaping, has increased rapidly in the last decade, especially among our youth population. In Kansas alone, nearly one in three Kansas students grade 9-12 reported having vaped at least once.<sup>1</sup> OHK is concerned by the increase, not only because of how young these habits are forming, but because of the harmful effects it can lead to in their oral and overall health. Below are three chemicals found in e-cigarettes and their effects on oral health.

**Propylene Glycol:** The breakdown of this chemical, one of the main ingredients in e-liquid used in e-cigarettes, is toxic to the enamel of the teeth and the soft tissue of the gums when used orally. It also leads to tissue dehydration, resulting in dry mouth which has shown increased risk of cavities, gum disease, and other oral health issues.

**Vegetable Glycerin and Flavorings:** This chemical makes up the sweet, flavored component of e-liquid. Research has shown that the combination of vegetable glycerin with flavorings can lead to a 27% decrease in the enamel hardness on teeth.<sup>2</sup>

**Nicotine:** Research shows that nicotine is a vasoconstrictor, meaning it reduces the amount of blood that can flow through your veins. Without sufficient blood flow, the gums do not get the oxygen and nutrients they need to stay healthy, causing death of the gum tissues.<sup>3</sup>

The bottom line is e-cigarettes can be just as dangerous when compared with smoking. We encourage the Committee to consider legislation to address the continuing rise in youth e-cigarette use. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on electronic cigarette use. Please do not hesitate to contact me ([cnance@ohks.org](mailto:cnance@ohks.org)) if Oral Health Kansas can answer questions or otherwise assist the Committee.

Sincerely,

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Policy Director

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<sup>1</sup>Healthy Kansas Schools. 2017. *Kansas YRBS Booklet*. Kansas Department of Education.

<sup>2</sup>Kim SA, Smith S, Beauchamp C, et al. Carcinogenic potential of sweet flavors in electronic-cigarette liquids. *PLoS One*.

<sup>3</sup>Malhotra R, Kapoor A, Grover V, Kaushal S. Nicotine and periodontal tissues. *J Indian Soc Periodontol*.