



Board of Directors

Sonja Armbruster
Wichita State University

Chip Blaser
Douglas Co. Community Found.

Melanie Simmer Beck
UMKC School of Dentistry

Frank D. Clepper, Jr.
Amerigroup Kansas, Inc.

Barb Conant
Kansas Advocates for Better Care

Janette Delinger, RDH, MSDH
Kansas Dental Hygienists' Assoc.

Robyne Goates
Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Kansas

Krista Hahn, RDH, MBA, ECP III
Marian Dental Clinic

Alexandro Martinez
ACLU of Kansas

Kevin Robertson, MPA, CAE
Kansas Dental Association

Nick Rogers, DDS
Rogers Family Dentistry

Amber Sellers
Kansas Democratic Party

Jonalan Smith
Sunflower Health Plan

Lissa Staley
Topeka & Shawnee Co. Public Library

**Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee
February 12, 2019**

Chairman Suellentrop and members of the Committee,

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. 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.¹ Oral Health Kansas 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. Propylene glycol, a main ingredient in the e-liquid used in electronic cigarettes has been found to lead to tissue dehydration, resulting in dry mouth which has shown increased cavities, gum disease, and other oral health issues. Vegetable Glycerin in combination with the flavorings that make up the sweet, flavored component of e-liquid can lead to a 27% decrease in enamel hardness on teeth.² However, the most concerning component of the e-liquid is 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.³

Electronic cigarettes can be just as dangerous when compared with traditional cigarettes and both products can have a lasting negative impact on the health of our youth. To protect our youth from this lifelong habit, we need policies in place that prevent them from gaining access to these addictive products. We encourage the Committee to consider legislation to raise the age for purchase and sale of tobacco products and electronic cigarettes from 18 to 21 to address the continuing rise in youth e-cigarette use across our state. Please do not hesitate to contact me (cnance@ohks.org) if Oral Health Kansas can answer questions or otherwise assist the Committee.

Sincerely,

Christi Nance
Policy Director

800 SW Jackson, Suite 1120
Topeka, KS 66612

785.235.6039 (phone)
785.233.5564 (fax)
info@oralhealthkansas.org

www.oralhealthkansas.org

¹Healthy Kansas Schools. 2017. *Kansas YRBS Booklet*. Kansas Department of Education.

²Kim SA, SmithS, Beauchamp C, et al. Cariogenic potential of sweet flavors in electronic-cigarette liquids. *PLoS One*.

³Malhotra R, Kapoor A, Grover V, Kaushal S. Nicotine and periodontal tissues. *J Indian Soc Periodontal*.