



Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services

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Kentucky begins surveillance to track possible cases of severe pulmonary disease linked to vaping

FRANKFORT, Ky. (August 30, 2019) - The Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH) is working closely with health care providers, local health departments, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) to gather information and investigate severe pulmonary disease related to e-cigarette product use or vaping, primarily among adolescents and young adults.

“While there have no reported cases of severe respiratory illness related to e-cigarette or vaping in Kentucky so far, we remain vigilant in alerting health care providers to be on the lookout for patients with severe respiratory symptoms who report using electronic cigarettes or other vaping devices before they got sick,” said Dr. Doug Thoroughman, acting state epidemiologist for DPH. “State health officials will be sending out a public health alert to clinicians early next week and will investigate any cases reported here to look for common factors and collect information on products that may be the source of the illness.”

As of August 27, 2019, 215 possible cases have been reported from 25 states and additional reports of pulmonary illness are under investigation. One patient in Illinois with a history of recent e-cigarette use was hospitalized with severe pulmonary disease and died on Aug. 20.

Patients have had symptoms including cough, shortness of breath and fatigue, with symptoms growing worse over a period of days or weeks before admission to the hospital. Other symptoms may include fever, chest pain, nausea, abdominal pain and diarrhea. Most of the cases reported are among adolescents and young adults.

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, health officials are requesting that you refrain from further e-cigarette use and retain your device for possible further investigation.

The FDA encourages the public to submit detailed reports of any unexpected tobacco- or e-cigarette-related health or product issues to the FDA via the online [Safety Reporting Portal](#).

Additional information is available at <http://chfs.ky.gov/>.

The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services the Department for Public Health, the Department for Aging and Independent Living and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.