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Contact: Office of Communications (614) 644-8562

ODH Announces New Initiatives to Educate Youth and Parents About Vaping Dangers and to Provide Tools for Quitting *As They Investigate, CDC Now Warns People Against Vaping*

COLUMBUS – Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Amy Acton, MD, MPH, today announced new initiatives to prevent and reduce youth vaping. This comes following recent warnings from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) about severe pulmonary illnesses reported following vaping.

State and local public health officials in Ohio have confirmed that 10 reports of severe pulmonary illness after vaping are likely due to vaping and are investigating an additional 14 reports of illness. Nationally in 33 states, CDC says that it is aware of more than 450 possible cases of severe pulmonary illness after vaping and at least five deaths.

“The explosive increase in vaping among our youth is a public health crisis, and we must educate them and their parents about the dangers of vaping,” said ODH Director Amy Acton, MD, MPH. “Youth have shown an increased vulnerability to nicotine addiction, and evidence suggests that nicotine use during adolescence and young adulthood has long-term impacts on brain development. Last year alone, we saw a 48% increase in vaping among middle schoolers and a 78% increase in vaping among high schoolers. We must provide resources to help our youth to quit using any tobacco products, including vaping.”

ODH announced several new initiatives to address vaping and tobacco use:

- Letter to Ohio school districts encouraging them, in their school policies, to prohibit the use of vaping products and to warn school administrators, teachers, parents, and students about the dangers of vaping and where to get free help to quit;
- Investment of approximately \$3.3 million to develop and promote a set of tools and resources that can be used by community groups, organizations, and others to help educate youth and community members about the dangers of vaping and actions they can take to curb vaping in their communities. These tools are likely to include a web-based youth vaping prevention education module, parent/caregiver awareness education, public awareness initiatives, and outreach to community stakeholders;
- Investment of approximately \$800,000 in public education campaigns targeting youth and their parents about vaping, as well as Ohio’s new law prohibiting the sale of tobacco, including vaping products, to individuals younger than 21. This new law takes effect on Oct. 17, 2019.

“Tobacco and other companies are addicting our next generation through vaping -- and it is simply not safe. Candy-flavored liquids and intentional marketing tactics are clearly being used to attract and addict young people to vaping,” said Ohio Governor Mike DeWine. “That is wrong, and we must continually look for new ways to reduce vaping in Ohio, especially among our kids!”

People should consider not using e-cigarette products while this investigation is ongoing, according to CDC. The agency also says that e-cigarette products should never be used by youth, young adults, pregnant women, or adults who do not currently use tobacco products. People who do use e-cigarette products should monitor

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