

Public Health Nurse Statement in Support of the Nicotine-Free Generation Policy

As a Public Health Nurse, I endorse and support the implementation of the Nicotine-Free Generation policy. This initiative represents a critical step towards safeguarding the health and well-being of our community's youngest members, and it aligns with our overarching goal of promoting public health and preventing tobacco-related diseases.

The Nicotine-Free Generation policy is an approach that seeks to create a healthier and smoke-free environment for our youth. It is essential to address the evolving landscape of tobacco use, including the rising popularity of e-cigarettes among our youth. Research has raised significant concerns about the potential adverse effects of e-cigarette use on cardiovascular and respiratory health.

Studies have shown that the aerosols produced by e-cigarettes contain harmful substances such as nicotine, fine particles, and various toxic chemicals. These substances, when inhaled, can have detrimental effects on the cardiovascular system, including an increased risk of heart disease and stroke. For example, a study published in the *Journal of the American Heart Association* in 2019 found that e-cigarette users had a higher risk of having a heart attack compared to non-users (Bhatta, 2019).

Beyond cardiovascular concerns, e-cigarette aerosols can also harm the respiratory system. Research has linked e-cigarette use to lung injury cases, known as e-cigarette or vaping product use associated lung injury (EVALI). The outbreak of EVALI cases among young users in 2019 highlighted the serious risks associated with e-cigarette use, leading to hospitalizations and even fatalities (Angela K. Werner, 2020).

Adolescence is a crucial period for brain development, and exposure to nicotine during this time can harm cognitive functions such as attention, memory, and impulse control. Studies have shown that the developing brains of adolescents and young adults are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of nicotine (Kathleen Stratton, 2018).

I firmly believe that the Tobacco Free Generation policy is a necessary step in our ongoing efforts to improve public health, protect our youth, and reduce the devastating impact of nicotine-related diseases. We have known smoking is bad since 1957; Surgeon General Leroy E. Burney declared it the official position of the U.S. Public Health Service that the evidence pointed to a causal relationship between smoking and lung cancer. We can ensure that our policy helps create a healthier, safer, and nicotine-free environment for the generations to come, while also mitigating the risks associated with emerging tobacco products like vapes and smokeless tobacco. The generous timeline associated with the implementation of this initiative will allow businesses the time they need to replace nicotine products with other sources of income. Together, we can all make a significant and lasting impact on the health and well-being of our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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References

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