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Dear Dr. Smith,

We, the undersigned public health and health equity leaders from throughout the state, want to express our strong support for the California Department of Public Health's recent steps to protect California's youth from the dangers posed by e-cigarettes. As public health professionals, we concur with the Department and believe that the time to take public health action on e-cigarettes is now.

The vaping industry has been blowing smoke to obscure the emerging science on the dangers e-cigarettes pose to public health. We've seen these tactics before. The tobacco industry spent decades denying that their products were killing off their customers and sowing doubt about solid science to stall the very regulations that have saved millions of lives. Tobacco control efforts since 1964 have kept eight million Americans from dying prematurely, either because they received support to quit smoking early--or never started smoking in the first place. If strong protections had been enacted earlier, many more lives would have been saved.

We applaud the Department of Public Health for slicing through the haze of misinformation surrounding these new products and highlighting emerging concerns. In a report issued this January, the Department found that e-cigarettes emit a harmful aerosol that contains at least 10 chemicals included in California's Proposition 65 list of chemicals known to cause cancer, birth defects or other reproductive harm. Use of e-cigarettes more than doubled among middle- and high-school students in in 2013 alone, with e-cigarettes increasingly serving as an on-ramp to nicotine addiction and other tobacco products among youth. <[http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6235a6.htm?s\\_cid=mm6235a6\\_w](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6235a6.htm?s_cid=mm6235a6_w)>.

Calls to California poison control centers surged between 2012 and 2014, from 19 e-cigarette-related poisonings in 2012 to 243 in 2014, with children age five and under representing the majority of victims. E-cigarette advertising has driven these unacceptable trends, with advertising expenditures vaulting more than 1,200 percent between 2011 and 2013. E-cigarette commercials put "smoking" back on the airwaves for the first time since the 1970s, and e-cigarette marketers employ tactics proven to appeal to youth, such as celebrity endorsements and candy flavors.

E-cigarettes threaten to undo hard-fought public health victories by reintroducing smoking to California workplaces, restaurants, bars, and other public spaces where traditional cigarettes have long been

banned. The status quo means more children hooked on nicotine, more poison control emergencies, increased exposure to secondhand vapors in previously protected spaces, and a mounting burden of preventable illness and injury. We need policies to protect public health, limit the marketing and sales of e-cigarettes, and extend smoke-free policies to cover e-cigarettes.

California has a long, proud history of leading the country in protecting and advancing public health, and the Department of Public Health has acted in that tradition by taking a strong stand against e-cigarettes. We applaud the Department for issuing a health advisory declaring e-cigarettes “a community health threat,” and launching a bold campaign to combat widespread misinformation peddled by e-cigarette marketers.

Thank you for your leadership and the efforts of the California Tobacco Control Program. We look forward to working alongside the Department to ensure all Californians, especially youth and other vulnerable populations, are protected from dangerous new tobacco products and unscrupulous tactics of those who profit from their marketing and sales.

Signed,

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