

Policy Tip Sheet



POLICY ANALYSIS FROM
THE HEARTLAND INSTITUTE

Tobacco Harm Reduction 101: Connecticut

Since their introduction to the U.S. market in 2007, e-cigarettes and vaping devices—tobacco harm reduction products that are 95 percent safer than combustible cigarettes—have helped more than three million American adults quit smoking.

1. Economic Impact

According to the Vapor Technology Association, in 2018, the industry created 478 direct vaping-related jobs, including manufacturing, retail, and wholesale jobs in Connecticut, which generated \$93 million in wages alone.¹ Moreover, the industry has created hundreds of secondary jobs in the Constitution State, bringing the total economic impact in 2018 to \$341,672,900. In the same year, Connecticut received more than \$19 million in state taxes attributable to the vaping industry. These figures do not include sales in convenience stores, which sell vapor products including disposables and prefilled cartridges. In 2016, sales of these products in Connecticut eclipsed \$3.5 million.²

2. State Health Department Data

As of December 16, 2019, the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CDPH) has reported 46 cases of vaping-related lung illnesses, including one death.³ CDPH provides age groupings of patients, reporting that 24 of the 46 patients are over the age of 25. CDPH offers no information on gender or substances vaped in recent reports. Interestingly, on September 19, 2019, the agency noted that nine of 11 patients with vaping-related lung illnesses reported using vapor containing tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the same substance other state health departments are linking vaping-related lung illnesses to. *The Heartland Institute gives CDPH a grade of D for information available on vaping-related lung illnesses.*

3. More Information Needed

The most recent report on youth e-cigarette use in Connecticut is from the 2017 Youth Tobacco Survey.⁴ According to the survey, in 2017, 19.2 percent of Connecticut 10th and 12th graders reported using a vapor product on 20 or more days in the 30 days prior to the survey. Moreover, 41.6 percent of high school students reported using a vapor product because their friend and/or family member used them, and only 23.9 percent cited “flavors” as a reason for e-cigarette use. More data is needed to understand the effects of public health campaigns on youth e-cigarette use.

4. Youth Sales Miniscule

From January 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) administered 6,718 tobacco age compliance inspections in Connecticut, in which the agency used a minor in an attempt to purchase tobacco products.⁵ Of those, 744, or 11 percent, resulted in a sale to a minor. Of the violations, 278 (37 percent of violations and 4 percent of all compliance checks) involved the sale of e-cigarettes or vaping devices. The number of violations involving sales of cigars and cigarettes were 264 and 187, respectively, during the same period.

5. Misspent Money

In 2019, Connecticut received an estimated \$459.6 million in tobacco taxes and tobacco settlement payments. In the same year, the state spent \$0 on funding tobacco control programs, including education and prevention.⁶ The lack of funding is most notable in the state’s telephone quit line, of which Connecticut spends \$0.15 per smoker, significantly lower than the national average of \$2.21.

Policy Solution

Electronic cigarettes and vaping devices have proven to be tremendous tobacco harm reduction tools, helping many smokers transition away from combustible cigarettes. Despite recent fearmongering, their use is significantly safer than traditional cigarettes, as noted by numerous public health groups including the Royal College of Physicians,⁷ Public Health England,⁸ and the American Cancer Society.⁹ Rather than restricting their use, and undoubtedly reducing public health gains and millions of dollars in economic output, lawmakers should dedicate existing tobacco funds on programs that actually reduce youth usage.

Key Points

- 1 Connecticut’s vaping industry provided more than \$341 million in economic activity in 2018 while generating 478 direct vaping-related jobs. Sales of disposables and prefilled cartridges in Connecticut exceeded \$3.5 million in 2016.
- 2 As of January 17, 2020, CDPH has reported 46 cases of vaping-related lung illnesses, including one death. CDPH deserves a **D** for its transparency on vaping-related lung illnesses.
- 3 In 2017, only 23.9 percent of Connecticut high school students cited flavors as a reason for e-cigarette use. More data is needed.
- 4 Only 4 percent of FDA retail compliance checks in Connecticut resulted in sales of e-cigarettes to minors from January 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019.
- 5 Connecticut spends very little on tobacco prevention. In 2019, Connecticut dedicated \$0 to tobacco control programs including education and prevention, despite receiving \$459.6 million in tobacco settlement payments and taxes in the same year.

Notes

Tobacco Harm Reduction 101: Connecticut

References

- ¹ Vapor Technology Association, “The Economic Impact of the Vapor Industry CONNECTICUT,” 2019, <https://vta.guerrillaeconomics.net/reports/0103d27f-cba2-4173-9511-d944f48a0869?>.
- ² Teresa W. Wang et al., “National and State-Specific Unit Sales and Prices for Electronic Cigarettes, United States, 2012-2016,” *Preventing Chronic Disease*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, August 2, 2018, https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2018/17_0555.htm.
- ³ Connecticut Department of Public Health, “The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) is investigating reports of lung injury associated with the use of e-cigarettes or vaping products,” December 16, 2019, <https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Health-Education-Management--Surveillance/Tobacco/Vaping>. Accessed January 22, 2020.
- ⁴ Connecticut Department of Public Health, “Connecticut Youth Tobacco Survey Results,” 2017, <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Departments-and-Agencies/DPH/dph/hems/tobacco/PDF/2017-CT-Youth-Tobacco-Survey-Results.pdf?la=en>.
- ⁵ U.S. Food and Drug Administration, “Compliance Check Inspections of Tobacco Product Retailers,” September 30, 2019, https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/oc/inspections/oc_insp_searching.cfm.
- ⁶ Truth Initiative, “Tobacco use in Connecticut,” June 28, 2019, <https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/smoking-region/tobacco-use-connecticut-2019>.
- ⁷ Royal College of Physicians, *Nicotine without Smoke: Tobacco Harm Reduction*, April 2016, <https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/projects/outputs/nicotinewithout-smoke-tobacco-harm-reduction-0>.
- ⁸ A. McNeill et al., “Evidence review of e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products 2018,” Public Health England, February 2018, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/684963/Evidence_review_of_e-cigarettes_and_heated_tobacco_products_2018.pdf.
- ⁹ The American Cancer Society, “What Do We Know About E-Cigarettes?” June 19, 2019, <https://web.archive.org/web/20190806152535/https://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/tobacco-and-cancer/e-cigarettes.html>.

For More Information, please refer to:

Tobacco Harm Reduction 101: A Guidebook for Policymakers

<https://www.heartland.org/publications-resources/publications/latest-heartland-policy-booklet-addresses-vaping-myths>

This booklet from The Heartland Institute aims to inform key stakeholders on the much-needed information on the benefits of electronic cigarettes and vaping devices. *Tobacco Harm Reduction 101* details the history of e-cigarettes, including regulatory actions on these products. The booklet also explains the role of nicotine, addresses tax policy and debunks many of the myths associated with e-cigarettes, including assertions about “popcorn lung,” formaldehyde, and the so-called youth vaping epidemic.

Nothing in this *Policy Tip Sheet* is intended to influence the passage of legislation, and it does not necessarily represent the views of The Heartland Institute. For further information on this and other topics, visit the [Budget & Tax News](#) website, [The Heartland Institute’s website](#), and [PolicyBot](#), Heartland’s free online research database.

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