



ILLINOIS ACADEMY OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS

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IAFP Testimony in support of SB 1561
Tabatha S. Wells, MD, FAAFP – Chair of the Board
March 8, 2023

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I am Dr. Tabatha Wells. and I am testifying as Chair of the Board of the Illinois Academy of Family Physicians, with over 4,700 members throughout the state. I attended medical school at SIU, trained as a family physician at SIU Springfield, and have spent many years caring for patients of all ages in Springfield, Chicago and Urbana. I speak today on behalf of the IAFP in support of SB 1561.

IAFP has been a partner in advocating for responsible and effective tobacco control policies at the local, state and federal levels for decades. We cheered when Illinois became the first Midwest state to adopt smoke free indoor workplaces in 2007.

Back in 2007, we as a health care community didn't anticipate the widespread infiltration of electronic cigarettes. They are easy to use, easy to disguise and can cause harm to the body that can be delivered directly by vaping and indirectly to bystanders through the vapors released into the air.

Nicotine exposure during adolescence can impact learning, memory, and attention. Vaping products produce airborne particles that can include heavy metals, volatile organic compounds, and ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deeply into the lungs, causing short-term lung changes and irritations.

Therefore, IAFP strongly supports prohibiting the use of all tobacco and nicotine products that emit smoke, vapor, or any form of inhalable substance in all public places. All tobacco or nicotine product smoke or inhalable vapor in indoor spaces must be eliminated to fully protect those who do not use these products.

We have already seen devastating effects of this epidemic. Youth are becoming hopelessly addicted before their families are even aware of it. As a physician, I would never use the words "safe alternative to smoking." We need to stop these myths and take vaping out of our public places.

According to findings reported at the American Heart Association's Epidemiology, Prevention, Lifestyle & Cardiometabolic Health Scientific Sessions earlier this year, teens and young adults who report vaping nicotine, marijuana or both are significantly more likely to experience anxiety and depression compared with never vapers, survey data show. Researchers also found that dual use of nicotine and marijuana vaping products may compound the addictive nature of vaping or attract those more prone to addiction, as well as have an impact on depression.

There is not yet sufficient data about the long-term effects of e-cigarette use. E-cigarettes have been found to increase heart rate and blood pressure. Initial research indicates that the aerosol can damage DNA and the respiratory system.

The Illinois Academy of Family Physicians strongly supports SB 1561 to include all vaping products in the Smoke-Free Illinois law as an absolute requirement that will protect public health.