Vaping-Associated Pulmonary Injury

On August 27, 2019, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) issued a Health Alert to advise healthcare providers about the current situation on Vaping-Associated Pulmonary Injury (VAPI). This Health Alert is available at www.fcdph.org/healthmessages. Most patients reported vaping the cannabis compounds THC and/or CBD, and some patients also reported vaping nicotine products, although the exact cause of illness is not yet known.

At this time, the Fresno County Department of Public Health (FCDPH), CDPH and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are requesting that healthcare providers report all suspected cases of vaping-associated pulmonary illness. Typically patients present with respiratory symptoms including cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, fever, chest pain, weight loss, nausea, and diarrhea that progress to severe pulmonary illness.

Since June 2019, thirty-six (36) cases of vaping-associated pulmonary injury requiring hospitalization have been reported to the CDPH. The CDPH and CDC are currently investigating over 200 cases of severe acute pulmonary disease linked to the use of vape devices nationwide. No deaths have been reported to date in California. The investigation is ongoing, and more information will be shared as it is available.

Recommendations for Providers

1. The FCDPH is requesting that healthcare providers consider the diagnosis of VAPI in patients presenting with respiratory complaints in both outpatient and inpatient settings, and ask about their use of vaping or “dabbing” devices,

Categories of Health Alert Messages:

- **Health Alert**: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention
- **Health Advisory**: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action
- **Health Update**: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action
- **Health Information**: Provides general health information which is not considered to be of emergent nature
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especially patients who had an initial diagnosis of pneumonia or bronchitis that did not respond to antibiotics. For patients who do vape, ask these follow-up questions:

- **Type of vape used**
  - Do you vape nicotine-containing substances?
  - Do you vape substances that contain cannabis or cannabinoid compounds like THC and/or CBD?

- **Amount of use**
  - When was the last time you vaped?
  - How often do you vape?
  - How long have you been vaping?

- **Source**
  - Where do you purchase your vaping supplies?
  - What brands are your vaping devices, cartridges, and oils?

2. Report all suspected cases of severe pulmonary illness requiring hospitalization AND with a history of vaping or dabbing to FCDPH within one business day.

   - Report suspected cases using the Confidential Morbidity Report (CMR) form. CMR forms are available at www.fcdph.org/cmr. Vaping associated information should be included in the CMR remarks section or attached as an additional page.

   - Since Vaping-Associated Pulmonary Injury is a relatively new condition, all information being requested here is needed on all patients to help better understand all possible causes, risk factors, and outcomes.

   - FCDPH staff may interview the patient or family members.

   - FCDPH may collect any biospecimens remaining from the patient from the hospital laboratory.

   - Healthcare providers do not have to order any specific cultures or tests on blood, urine that they would not normally request for the care of the patient.

   - FCDPH may collect vape devices and cartridges from the patient or family for testing if needed.

For more information about testing, diagnosing, and reporting, please contact FCDPH Communicable Disease Investigation at (559) 600-3332.

For more information about the Risks of Vaping Unlicensed or Unregulated Cannabis or Cannabidiol (CBD) Products, visit https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/Pages/RisksofVaping.aspx.