

The Pharmaceutical Society of New Zealand: Submission on the Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products (Vaping) Amendment Bill

The Pharmaceutical Society of New Zealand Inc. (the Society) is the professional association representing over 3,700 pharmacists, from all sectors of pharmacy practice. We provide to pharmacists professional support and representation, training for continuing professional development, and assistance to enable them to deliver to all New Zealanders the best pharmaceutical practice and professional services in relation to medicines. The Society focuses on the important role pharmacists have in medicines management and in the safe and quality use of medicines.

The Society supports the intent of the Bill to protect children and young people from the risks associated with vaping and using smokeless tobacco products. The Society also supports the extension of the current legislation to include provisions for regulation of vaping products and heated tobacco devices.

If e-cigarettes and related products are going to be used for the management of smoking cessation, as indicated by the government, to address the rising health issue, it is essential that they are treated as a full regulated medicine or medical devices. The proposed legislation uses a notification process (Part 4) which relies on the notifier providing evidence that their product meets the required standards rather than a government agency providing assurance. The Society recommends that the committee consider utilising similar methods to those used for medicines, especially if a potential "therapeutic" product (e-cigarettes) is being used to address a serious health related condition.

Health professionals should aim for patients to ultimately be free of nicotine addiction by stopping their use of tobacco and e-cigarette products.

Quitting tobacco smoking is most successful with ongoing behavioural support. Training and support to achieve this outcome should be consistent across all groups providing smoking cessation advice.

Specialist retailers have a potential conflict of interest between business requirements and potential health gains for their customers. If cessation is successful the customer is unlikely to return, which impacts on their business.

If the Bill progresses, the Society would like to see evidence and research considered at Select Committee which demonstrates that the continuation of supplies through a specialist retailer are beneficial for New Zealanders, apart from just restricting access to children and young people.

Any e-cigarette product should also be considered as a Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT). There should be appropriate e-cigarette cessation advice and a supportive plan for all people to stop the use of any NRT related product. Pharmacists and their teams could be trained and resourced to provide the support required to help people overcome their nicotine addiction and reduce the long-term use of e-cigarette products.

As the committee may be aware the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have stated that sweet flavours can encourage vaping and subsequent tobacco use in teenagers, but tobacco and menthol flavours could encourage adults to move away from tobacco smoking.

A recent study found participants with 1-year abstinence, 80% (63 of 79) were using e-cigarettes at 52 weeks in the e-cigarette group and 9% (4 of 44) were using nicotine replacement in the nicotine replacement group.¹ This suggests that it was easier for people to stop using NRT products than vaping products.

The Society does not support the use of multiple flavours beyond menthol, tobacco or potentially mint, or incentives and loyalty schemes which will encourage the ongoing use of e-cigarette products.

Our proposed recommendations above may also ensure e-cigarettes are seen by the media and general public as a tool to deliver a defined medical outcome rather than a product for recreational use.

The Society supports the potential reality of all New Zealanders become Smokefree by 2025 and we would be more than happy to work with government and other agencies to achieve this objective.

¹ Hajek P, Phillips-Waller A, Przulj D, Pesola F, Smith KM, Bisal N, *et al.* A randomized trial of e-cigarettes versus nicotine-replacement therapy. *New England Journal of Medicine* 2019;380:629-637. Available from: <https://www.nejm.org/doi/pdf/10.1056/NEJMoa1808779?articleTools=true> [cited 28/3/20]