



# **DPHHS HAN HEALTH ADVISORY UPDATE**

## **Cover Sheet**

**DATE:** October 11, 2019

**SUBJECT:** Report Vaping Associated Pulmonary Illness to Your Local Health Department

### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

**DISTRIBUTE** to your local HAN contacts. This HAN is intended for general sharing of information.

- Time for Forwarding: **As Soon As Possible**
- Please forward to DPHHS at [hhshan@mt.gov](mailto:hhshan@mt.gov)
- **Remove this cover sheet before redistributing and replace it with your own**

### **For LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT reference only**

DPHHS Subject Matter Resource for more information regarding this HAN, contact:

#### **DPHHS OESS**

**Laura Williamson** (406-444-0273)

[lwilliamson@mt.gov](mailto:lwilliamson@mt.gov)

**Lisa Richidt** (406-444-0927)

[lisa.richidt@mt.gov](mailto:lisa.richidt@mt.gov)

**Todd Harwell** (406-444-0303)

[tharwell@mt.gov](mailto:tharwell@mt.gov)

**DPHHS Health Alert Hotline:  
1-800-701-5769**

**DPHHS HAN Website:  
[www.han.mt.gov](http://www.han.mt.gov)**

## **REMOVE THIS COVER SHEET BEFORE REDISTRIBUTING AND REPLACE IT WITH YOUR OWN**

**Please ensure that DPHHS is included on your HAN distribution list.**

[hhshan@mt.gov](mailto:hhshan@mt.gov)

### **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.

**Information Service:** passes along low level priority messages that do not fit other HAN categories and are for informational purposes only.

**Please update your HAN contact information on the Montana Public Health Directory**

## Information Sheet

**Date:** October 11, 2019

**Subject:** Report Vaping Associated Pulmonary Illness to Your Local Health Department

**Background:** As of October 10, 2019, the Vaping Associated Pulmonary Illness (VAPI) outbreak includes 1,299 confirmed and probable cases and 26 deaths linked to e-cigarette use in 49 states and 1 U.S. territory. More than half of the cases involve patients under age 25. Montana has two confirmed cases, one individual in their 30s from Yellowstone County, and a second individual in their 20s from Gallatin County. Both Montana cases reported vaping nicotine, THC, and flavor containing products. The specific chemical exposure(s) causing lung injuries associated with e-cigarette use, or vaping, remains unknown at this time. No single product or substance has been linked to all lung injury cases.

**The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and DPHHS are advising everyone to not use any type of e-cigarette or vaping product until more information is known from this investigation.**

**Information:** On October 8, 2019, Governor Steve Bullock directed the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) to implement emergency administrative rules to temporarily prohibit the sale of flavored e-cigarettes. The emergency administrative rules also add VAPI to the list of reportable diseases and conditions to aid in the epidemiology investigation of the outbreak. Link to the emergency rules: <https://dphhs.mt.gov/administrativerules>

### Recommendations:

#### Healthcare Providers

DPHHS requires that healthcare providers report possible Vaping Associated Pulmonary Illness (VAPI) immediately to your local health department. Local health department contact information can be found at <https://dphhs.mt.gov/contact>

1. Ask all patients who report e-cigarette, or vaping, product use within the last 90 days about signs and symptoms of respiratory illness.
2. If e-cigarette, or vaping, product use is suspected as a possible etiology of a patient's lung injury, obtain a detailed history of the frequency of vaping and the products used, and document these in the medical notes.
3. Consider all possible causes of illness in patients reporting respiratory and gastrointestinal symptoms. Evaluate and treat for other possible causes of illness (e.g., infectious, rheumatologic, neoplastic) as clinically indicated. Consider consultation with specialists (pulmonary, infectious disease, critical care, medical toxicology) as appropriate.
4. Clinical improvement of patients with lung injury associated with e-cigarette use has been reported with the use of corticosteroids. The decision to use corticosteroids should be made on a case-by-case basis based on risks and benefits and the likelihood of other etiologies.
5. Lipoid pneumonia associated with inhalation of lipids in aerosols generated by e-cigarettes or vaping products has been reported based on the detection of lipid-laden alveolar macrophages obtained by bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL) and lipid staining (e.g., Oil Red O, Sudan Black). The decision about whether to perform a BAL should be based on individual clinical circumstances.

6. Lung biopsies have been performed on some patients. If a lung biopsy is obtained, lipid staining may be considered during pathologic examination, and is best performed on fresh tissue. Routine pathology tissue processing (including formalin-fixation and paraffin-embedding) can remove lipids. Conducting routine tissue processing and histopathologic evaluation is still important. Consider consultation with specialists in pulmonary medicine and pathology to help inform any evaluation plan.
7. Patients who have received treatment for lung injury related to e-cigarette or vaping product use should undergo follow-up evaluation as clinically indicated to monitor pulmonary function.
8. Ask the medical examiner or coroner's office and hospital pathologists to report possible deaths, especially those without an alternative, likely diagnosis. If individuals are identified after death or at autopsy who showed signs of lung injury as described above, medical examiners and coroners are encouraged to report the cases to their local or state health department.

For the coming flu season, the CDC recommends that clinicians strongly consider respiratory infections such as influenza, as well as lung injury associated with e-cigarette use, or vaping, in all patients presenting with respiratory symptoms and a history of e-cigarette use, or vaping.

For further clinical considerations and resources visit the CDC website, [www.cdc.gov/tobacco](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco).

Visit the DPHHS website, [www.dphhs.mt.gov](http://www.dphhs.mt.gov), for up-to-date information including confirmed case count and other information deemed necessary.

### **Local Health Departments**

DPHHS will provide local health departments technical assistance with case investigation. Please notify DPHHS's State Epidemiologist, Laura Williamson, at 444-0064 ([lwilliamson@mt.gov](mailto:lwilliamson@mt.gov)) or Senior Epidemiologist, Lisa Richidt, at 444-0927 ([lisa.richidt@mt.gov](mailto:lisa.richidt@mt.gov)) as soon as practical about potential VAPI case(s) in your jurisdiction.

Please share this information with your staff and health care partners practicing in your jurisdiction, including hospitalists, infection control practitioners, pulmonologists, pediatricians, and internal medicine.