

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee,

My name is Margi Soni. I am a Nurse Practitioner in Pulmonary Medicine, as well as the associate medical director of the Tobacco Treatment Program at St. Luke's.

My clinic days are filled with current and former smokers. Their lives are hard. They are barely able to breathe, carrying oxygen tanks with them everywhere, pushing walkers. Most of them have multiple medical problems from smoking, on top of their lung disease. My patients are miserable. And many of them are embarrassed. They say, "I'm not dumb, I know I'm killing myself. I can't stop". Even as they work with me to quit, they tell me, "I wish I had never started. I never thought this would be my life". Every single one of them started smoking before age 21.

YES **Cigarette Use**
 Teen smoking rates are down a bit in the past few years, mostly due to changing social acceptance of smoking. And because kids have moved on to vaping. One in 4 kids in high school here in Idaho are now using e-cigarettes . 25%! (<https://www.sde.idaho.gov/student-engagement/school-health/files/youth/2015-Fact-Sheets.pdf>)

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 The head of the FDA said "Nicotine addiction begins when most tobacco users are teen-agers, so let's call this what it really is: a pediatric disease." That was in 1995. Kids smoke and vape in the shadows, becoming addicted before they realize what has happened. They become the adults we see die of smoking related diseases.

(<http://www.nytimes.com/1995/03/09/us/fda-head-calls-smoking-a-pediatric-disease.html>)

The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine came out with a report this past January about e-cigarettes. Here's what they say. (This is the most complete study on e-cigarettes to date, by the way).

1. There is **substantial evidence** that e-cigarette use increases the risk of smoking in youth and young adults.
2. There is **substantial evidence** that e-cigarette use results in dependence on e-cigarettes due to the presence of nicotine, like what Dr Shalz was talking about.
3. There is **conclusive evidence** that in addition to nicotine, most e-cigarette products contain numerous potentially toxic substances that are being inhaled.
4. There is **substantial evidence** that chemicals present in e-cigarettes can cause physical damage to the body (increased risk of pneumonia, bronchitis in kids, etc.) but the long term exposure risks are still being studied. (Vaping is relatively new and diseases take a long time to develop)

(<https://www.nap.edu/resource/24952/012318ecigaretteConclusionsbyOutcome.pdf>)

Vaping is "cool", and has re-normalized smoking in middle and high school with vape tricks like smoke rings and games around vaping. In addition to these games, "dripping," (a practice in which e-liquid is dripped directly onto the metal coil) exposes users to higher levels of nicotine and other toxins, according to a recent study. Kids are being kids. They aren't JUST vaping. They are doing stupid teen things, experimenting, pushing the limits. (E-Cigarettes and "Dripping" Among High-School Youth. Suchitra Krishnan-Sarin, PhD,^a Meghan Morean, PhD,^b Grace Kong, PhD,^a Krysten W. Bold, PhD,^a Deepa R. Camenga, MD,^c Dana A. Cavallo, PhD,^a Patricia Simon, PhD,^a Ran Wu, MS^a)

E-cigs are marketed directly to young kids with safe sounding flavors, also called "juice", that include Gummy Bear, Bubble Gum, Wonka Sweet Tarts, Cotton Candy, and others. Sweeter flavors have been

associated with higher levels of abuse by youth; youth who the same studies show will go on to become smokers. E-cigarettes are made in the shapes of ink pens and USB chargers to hide them from adult use, so underage kids can vape without being caught.

(<https://www.nap.edu/resource/24952/012318ecigaretteConclusionsbyOutcome.pdf>)

Most kids who vape now have never used tobacco, and have no intention of becoming cigarette smokers. They KNOW smoking is bad for them. They are vaping as a "healthy alternative" to an addiction they don't (yet) have. This brings us back to nicotine. Nicotine in e-cigarettes gets kids hooked on the drug, which turns into a smoking habit. They are not mentally equipped before age 21 to fully resist social pressures and their own adolescent brains, either in the form of regular cigarettes or e-cigs. Raising the minimum legal age of all nicotine products to 21 would prevent addiction to tobacco and would keep these kids from becoming my patients.

LET'S
ALCOHOL & TOBACCO DON'T
HAVE THE SAME ADDICTIVE
POTENTIAL IN ADOLESCENT
BRAINS.

I AM DEEPLY SADDENED TO HEAR
THE ARGUMENT THAT LOSS OF
MONEY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN LOSS
OF LIFE

I ASKED MY 14 YR OLD DAUGHTER HOW
HER FRIENDS GET ~~TO~~ NICOTINE,
SHE REPLIED IN A MILLISECOND,
18 YR OLDS WHO CAN LEGALLY
SMOKE