

MINUTES
SENATE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, February 04, 2020

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW54

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Martin, Vice Chair Souza, Senators Heider, Lee, Harris, Burtenshaw, Bayer, Jordan, and Nelson

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: None

NOTE: The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

CONVENED: **Chairman Martin** called to order the meeting of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee (Committee) at 3:00 p.m.

PRESENTATION: **Bonnie Halpern-Felsher**, Ph.D., Developmental Psychologist, presented information on the youth vaping epidemic. She stated that her presentation would include information regarding national and local tobacco usage rates, an introduction to e-cigarettes/vaping/cannabis and what e-cigarettes are, how they work, and what is in them. See attachment 1. While cigarette use has decreased, e-cigarette use has significantly increased, especially from 2017-2018. Approximately one in five students uses e-cigarettes. Idaho's youth is at 41 percent for usage in the past month.

Dr. Halpern-Felsher described the five generations of vaping products and how they work. Many of these products are easy to hide, and that appeals to young people.

Dr. Halpern-Felsher then explained the amount of nicotine in these products, the effect of the chemicals on the brain, and their impact on the heart and lungs. Youth use anywhere from one to three pods a day and do not know the amount of nicotine contained in them. The Juul label indicates it has 5 percent strength, but the label doesn't explain that equals 41 milligrams of nicotine.

E-cigarette, or vaping, product use associated lung injury (EVALI), caused 60 deaths from January 1, 2020, through January 21, 2020. There were 2,711 hospitalized cases of severe lung damage linked to vaping. All vaped THC, nicotine, or both. Sixteen percent were under 18 years of age, and 38 percent were 18 to 24 years of age.

Dr. Halpern-Felsher said there are some things that can be done. First of all, e-cigarettes should be considered a tobacco product as identified on the books, because nicotine comes from tobacco products. Second, a permit system is needed for all vape shops, and compliance checks need to be in place. Presently, those shops do not card youths. The lower cost of e-cigarettes compared to traditional cigarettes is appealing to youths. Prices should be equalized and all tobacco products should cost the same. Also, there is insufficient evidence to prove that adults who are using e-cigarettes are being helped to stop smoking traditional cigarettes. The fact is, adults are just switching products, not quitting.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Jordan** referred to the 2,700 who were hospitalized, but the CDC only tested 100 lungs and there is no definitive data. She asked what would be definitive data. **Dr. Halpern-Felsher** replied that she didn't know. **Senator Heider** inquired if "regulate" refers to a penalty, and how that would occur. **Dr. Halpern-Felsher** said she doesn't view regulating as a youth penalty at all. It is up to adults to regulate the industry. She explained there should not be fines or penalties, but rather support for youths and limited access to e-cigarettes. **Senator Bayer** asked about the damage that is done to the lungs. The reply was that pneumonia and asthma are directly linked to e-cigarettes and nicotine. **Vice Chair Souza** said that she had been told that marijuana can be made into a paste and also can become odorless and inquired if that was true. **Dr. Halpern-Felsher** replied in the affirmative.

PASSED THE GAVEL: Chairman Martin passed the gavel to Vice Chair Souza.

Vice Chair Souza asked if the Committee could now hear **H 310**, followed by the Red Cross presentation. There were no objections.

H 310 **Fernando Castro**, Supervisor for the Criminal History Unit, Department of Health and Welfare (Department), presented **H 310**. He stated that this bill charges the Department to conduct background checks on individuals who provide care or services to vulnerable adults or children. Section 4(c) of the statute refers to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) National Crime Information Center (NCIC) as being a source of information. The FBI has asked that specific references to the NCIC be removed from the statute because the FBI has never had access to the entire NCIC. The current language suggests that it does. See attachments 2 and 3.

MOTION: **Senator Lee** moved to send **H 310** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Harris** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senator Heider will carry the bill.

PRESENTATION: **Roy Eiguren**, of Eiguren Ellis Public Policy Firm and Chairman of the American Red Cross of Greater Idaho, presented information about the Blood/Biomed Program. **Mr. Eiguren** noted that Steve Carr from Idaho Falls has served on the Global Red Cross Board which is based in Geneva Switzerland and is the only Idahoan to do so.

One hundred percent of funding for the Red Cross comes from the private sector and the organization has more than 500 volunteers across Idaho. The Red Cross helps people affected by disaster; supports members of the military and their families; provides health and safety training programs; conducts blood collection and distribution; and runs an international relief and development program. See attachment 4.

Nicole Siewack Erwin, CEO of the American Red Cross, explained how the programs of the Red Cross work. They serve over 100,000 people throughout the state, and this is done by 539 volunteers who donate more than 34,000 hours. The value of this service is \$856,000 per year which is a great savings to taxpayers. Idahoans donate approximately 60,000 pints of blood each year and each pint saves up to three lives. See attachment 5. Volunteers are installing smoke alarms in high-risk neighborhoods across Idaho and **Ms. Erwin** stated that home fires kill up to seven people each day. CPR is also taught and 1,275 people were trained in CPR. **Vice Chair Souza** inquired if CPR could be taught to the Committee, and **Ms. Erwin** answered affirmatively.

Senator Jordan asked about the requirements for smoke detector installation. **Ms. Erwin** stated there is a website, an 800 number, and campaigns throughout the state canvassing mobile home parks.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Vice Chair Souza** adjourned the meeting at 3:51 p.m.

Senator Martin
Chair

Margo Miller
Secretary

Juanita Budell
Assistant Secretary