PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 9, 2014

LAS VEGAS – A decision by the Clark County School Board to include e-cigarettes as products prohibited on school district campuses has been praised by the Nevada Tobacco Prevention Coalition (NTPC). The School Board unanimously agreed to move forward with the ban April 24th, then approved final changes to Clark County School District policies at its May 8th meeting.

“We applaud the Clark County School Board for taking this action,” said Allison Newlon Moser, NTPC president and Executive Director of the American Lung Association in Nevada. “It supports NTPC’s position on e-cigarettes and is consistent with the FDA’s recent decision to regulate them as tobacco products.”

The change to CCSD policy prohibits the “use of an ‘e-cigarette’ which creates a vapor, in any manner or in any form, or the use of any oral smoking device for the purpose of circumventing the prohibition of smoking in this policy.”

At the School Board’s April 24th meeting, Newlon Moser and NTPC Executive Board member Maria Azzarelli presented information on e-cigarettes that addressed concerns about health risks and marketing practices, among others, both of which factored into the School Board’s decision.

“E-cigarettes are perceived to be harm reducing or safe alternatives to conventional cigarettes, but there isn’t any reliable science to support this,” said Azzarelli, Tobacco Control Coordinator at the Southern Nevada Health District. “They emit an aerosol that contains nicotine, which is highly addictive, along with ultrafine particles and low levels of toxins that can cause cancer,” adding that tests have revealed wildly fluctuating levels of nicotine not only from brand-to-brand, but cartridge-to-cartridge.

E-cigarettes come in flavors such as bubble gum and cotton candy, leading to criticism of manufacturer marketing practices that target youths, something that was not lost on School Board members and district officials as they decided students shouldn’t be exposed to e-cigarette use. Eliminating youth marketing and access are NTPC priorities.
Newlon Moser noted that e-cigarette use is trending in much the same way cigarettes and other tobacco products did before the health risks of smoking became public. E-cigarette manufacturers, which include Big Tobacco companies, glamorize their products as fashionable, safe alternatives to smoking tobacco despite the fact that early studies show the science, while still evolving, does not support that.

“Presently, new generations of Nevadans are at risk of addiction, the consequences of which can be devastating,” Newlon Moser concluded. “Action like that taken by the Clark County School Board is a big step in the right direction,” adding that the cost of tobacco use and addiction is an increasing burden for the state.

“In addition to what the FDA has proposed, it’s important our state legislature also take appropriate steps to minimize the potential harm these products can cause as they become more prevalent.”

The Nevada Tobacco Prevention Coalition is an organization of government agencies, non-profits, health care groups, educational partners and volunteers from throughout the state. Its mission is to reduce the burden of tobacco and the negative impacts of tobacco use. A copy of its position paper on e-cigarettes can be found as a separate attachment.

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