

**August 30, 2019**

**\*\*\*CONSUMER ALERT\*\*\***

**ATTORNEY GENERAL URGES CONSUMERS TO AVOID USING E-CIGARETTES OR VAPE PRODUCTS**

**Chicago** — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today urged Illinois residents to avoid using e-cigarette or vape devices following several reported instances of users becoming seriously ill and being hospitalized after using such products. In particular, children, young adults, pregnant women, and adults who do not currently use tobacco products should not use e-cigarettes.

Attorney General Raoul is urging Illinoisans to avoid using e-cigarette or vape products after nationwide reports of users being hospitalized. Since June, approximately 300 residents of 23 states have been hospitalized after experiencing severe respiratory problems and other worsening symptoms after using e-cigarette or vape products. According to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), 27 cases have been reported in Chicago and Champaign, as well as Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, Madison, McHenry, Peoria, St. Clair, Tazewell, Will, and Winnebago counties. Cases involve individuals between the ages of 17 and 38 and have resulted in one fatality.

“E-cigarettes are appealing to consumers for a number of reasons, including the mistaken belief that e-cigarettes are somehow safer than other tobacco products,” Raoul said. “As people around the country report being hospitalized after using e-cigarettes or vape pens, and with one fatality already in the state of Illinois, it is clear that vaping products pose a significant health risk and should be avoided.”

According to Raoul, symptoms experienced by individuals who have become ill range from difficulty breathing, coughing and fatigue, to vomiting and diarrhea. People who have been hospitalized reported that their symptoms worsened in the days or weeks after using e-cigarettes or vape products. Raoul encourages anyone experiencing such symptoms after using e-cigarette products – even if symptoms do not take place instantaneously – to seek immediate medical attention.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported that many patients, including some in Illinois, reported vaping products containing tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) before experiencing symptoms. Although the reported illnesses have not been linked to any particular e-cigarette or vape product, no e-cigarette or vape product has been conclusively eliminated as a potential source of the illnesses.

According to the IDPH, the aerosol created by e-cigarettes can contain harmful ingredients. The Food and Drug Administration has also reported that some people who use e-cigarettes – primarily youth and young adults – have experienced seizures, which are a potential side effect of nicotine toxicity.

The Illinois Attorney General’s office has long fought to decrease the use of tobacco and nicotine products, particularly by young people. In June 2018, the Attorney General’s office asked the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ban flavored tobacco products. In May, Attorney General Raoul urged the FDA to strengthen e-cigarette guidance by prioritizing enforcement actions against flavored e-cigarettes. Earlier this month, the Attorney General and a coalition of attorneys general urged the streaming video industry to adopt policies to protect young viewers from often glamorized tobacco content.

Currently, the Attorney General’s office is investigating one of the nation’s leading e-cigarette companies, Juul Labs, for possible violations of Illinois’ consumer protection laws. According to the Wall Street Journal, Juul sold more than 12 million devices and 390 refill pods in the U.S. during just the first half of 2019. While

the Attorney General's investigation into Juul's marketing practices is ongoing, the office is also evaluating the possibility of investigating additional e-cigarette companies.

Attorney General Raoul is encouraging Illinoisans who became ill after using e-cigarettes or vape products to file complaints on his [website](#) or by calling one of Raoul's Consumer Fraud Hotlines: 1-800-386-5438, Chicago; 1-800-243-0618, Springfield; or 1-800-243-0607, Carbondale.

For more information and free resources to help quit tobacco, please visit the Illinois Tobacco Quitline [website](#) or call 1-866-QUIT-YES.