



## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# Illinois Resident Experiencing Respiratory Illness After Vaping Dies

*Number of respiratory cases in Illinois doubles*

**SPRINGFIELD** – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) learned of the death of an individual who had recently vaped and was hospitalized with severe respiratory illness. The number of cases of people reported to IDPH who have used e-cigarettes or vaped and have been hospitalized with respiratory symptoms has doubled in the past week. A total of 22 people, ranging in age from 17-38 years, have experienced respiratory illness after using e-cigarettes or vaping. IDPH is working with local health departments to investigate another 12 individuals. Affected individuals have experienced respiratory symptoms including cough, shortness of breath, and fatigue. Some also experienced vomiting and diarrhea. Symptoms worsened over a period of days or weeks before admission to the hospital.

“The severity of illness people are experiencing is alarming and we must get the word out that using e-cigarettes and vaping can be dangerous,” said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. “We requested a team from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help us investigate these cases and they arrived in Illinois on Tuesday.”

IDPH is also working with local health departments, other state health departments, and the Food and Drug Administration to investigate the names and types of e-cigarettes, vaping products, and devices, as well as where they were obtained.

According to the CDC, in many cases, including Illinois, patients have acknowledged to health care personnel recent use of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)-containing products. However, no specific product has been identified in all cases, nor has any product been conclusively linked to illnesses. Even though cases appear similar, it is not clear if these cases have a common cause or if they are different diseases with similar symptoms.

Cases have been reported in Chicago and Champaign, Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, Madison, McHenry, Peoria, St. Clair, and Will counties. In order to protect the identity of the affected individuals, additional information is not being provided. The investigation is ongoing and more information will be shared as it is available.

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People who experience any type of chest pain or difficulty breathing after using e-cigarettes or vaping in the weeks or months prior to these symptoms should seek immediate medical attention. Health care providers caring for patients with unexpected serious respiratory illness should ask about a history of vaping or e-cigarette use.

More information about e-cigarettes, vapes, and JUULs can be found on the IDPH website at <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/prevention-wellness/tobacco/e-cigarettes-and-vapes>.

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<sup>1</sup> Includes using an electronic device (e.g. electronic nicotine delivery system (ENDS), electronic cigarette, e-cigarette, vaporizer, vape(s), vape pen, dab pen, or other) to inhale substances (e.g. nicotine, marijuana, THC, THC concentrates, CBD, synthetic cannabinoids, flavorings, or other substances), with or without smoking any plant, chemical, or substance.