

House Bill 170 by Representative Carol Alvarado
Relating to regulation of vapor products; authorizing fees; creating offenses.
House Committee on Public Health, March 10, 2015
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Chairwoman Crownover, members of the committee, my name is Ernest Hawk and I serve as the vice president and division head of prevention and population sciences at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.

There's a lot we don't know about e-cigarettes.

As a result, when it comes to regulating the latest addictive nicotine delivery device, many agencies and policymakers are still awaiting more facts to come in.

As a science-based organization, we applaud any and all instances where sound data informs public policy. So let's examine what we do know.

More than 466 brands of e-cigarettes currently exist. A recent study estimated that 6.8% of adults used e-cigarettes in 2013. That percentage may not sound too alarming until you consider the following: In 2012, 10% of high school students reported using an e-cigarette. Furthermore, the number of young people in grades 6 through 12 who admitted they had used e-cigarettes skyrocketed from 79,000 in 2011 to more than 263,000 in 2013.

These statistics are particularly alarming due to the fact that 88% of adult smokers started their habitual use as children. E-cigarettes use today might serve as a future gateway to conventional cigarettes for our kids. This would be a real tragedy given that youth smoking rates are finally on the decline.

One reason why kids are likely drawn to "vaping" is this: It's been estimated over 7,700 e-liquid flavors are currently available. One online retailer, whose inventory includes over 200 flavors, sells the following: Apple Pie a la Mode, Blueberry Cotton Candy, Gummy Candy, Toasted Marshmallow and Sweet Tarts.

This mind-boggling assortment of flavors, many which appeal to younger tastes, may help explain another troubling statistic: the skyrocketing number of calls to our nation's poison centers linked to e-cigarettes. According to a study by the Centers for