

MaineHealth  
Center for Tobacco  
Independence

## E-Cigarette Adult Statement

The MaineHealth Center for Tobacco Independence (CTI) was founded over two decades ago to support a tobacco-free Maine through education, prevention, policy, treatment and training initiatives. Our services – including treatment offered through the Maine QuitLink<sup>i</sup> – welcome all individuals who are looking for assistance relating to tobacco / nicotine use and dependence. These services are available to those who wish to quit the use of e-cigarettes, classified by the FDA and Maine law as tobacco products.

In the past decade, e-cigarettes (also known as Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems or ENDS, Electronic Vapor Products, Electronic Smoking Devices, Vape Pens, E-hookahs, Tank Systems, or Mods) have emerged as an alternative product to traditional combustible and smokeless tobacco. Since introduction, products have evolved in terms of the technology used as well as efficiency of nicotine delivery.

For youth, there is ample and clear evidence that the use of e-cigarettes is associated with significant health concerns. Use of e-cigarettes increases susceptibility to transitioning to use of combustible products, as well as dual use. Further, nearly all e-cigarettes contain nicotine – an addictive substance that interferes with adolescent brain development. Many of these devices also contain flavoring and other additives for which there is growing evidence of additional harm. For these reasons, CTI does not support the use of e-cigarettes in the adolescent population.

For adults seeking to quit tobacco, the most effective treatment methods have not changed. First-line FDA medications for tobacco treatment include nicotine replacement therapy (including over-the-counter medications such as the patch, gum and lozenge) as well as prescription medications such as varenicline, bupropion and the nicotine nasal spray and nicotine inhaler. When coupled with behavioral interventions such as telephonic counseling, these medications are the most effective and proven method to help individuals become tobacco-free.<sup>ii</sup>

For adults seeking to quit tobacco, there is a limited evidence base which indicates that e-cigarettes may have some potential to act as a cessation tool in some populations for whom either first-line FDA medications are not effective or those who are interested in switching to e-cigarettes exclusively. There are however ongoing concerns regarding use of e-cigarettes as a treatment tool:

- E-cigarettes are most commonly used in conjunction with other tobacco products, which is referred to as dual use. While the science is still evolving, some research shows that dual use may increase health risks, particularly for those who use both products for a long period of time.
- E-Cigarettes are not considered an evidence-based treatment by the US FDA. Unlike first-line treatments with strong safety profiles, no treatment or prescription guidelines exist for e-cigarettes.<sup>iii</sup>
- Health risks associated with long-term use of e-cigarettes are unknown, based on their emergence onto the market within the past decade. While there is some reason to believe that electronic products may pose less harm than use of combustible tobacco products, there is also growing evidence of potential harm. In short, more time is needed to determine the health effects of long-term use of e-cigarettes.

Most of the people who are served through the Maine QuitLink (MQL) are looking to quit all tobacco products. If, in the course of treatment provided through the MQL, a participant states that they wish to use e-cigarettes as a treatment tool, we will support them in their efforts without judgement - but stay consistent with our standard approach to inform participants about the potential risks and benefits of any approach or product they may choose.

---

<sup>i</sup> The Maine QuitLink free service providing evidence-based phone and digital tobacco treatment services for all Maine residents: [www.MaineQuitLink.com](http://www.MaineQuitLink.com)

<sup>ii</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit\\_smoking/cessation/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/cessation/index.htm)

<sup>iii</sup> In October 2021, the FDA authorized an e-cigarette product to be marketed and sold for adult use, noting that the potential benefit to smokers who switch completely [to electronic products] or significantly reduce their cigarette use outweighs the risk [electronic cigarettes] pose to youth. This authorization does not mean, however, that the products are approved for tobacco treatment or therapeutic purposes.