

Vaping Alert

Attention: Physicians, Emergency Departments, Nurse Practitioners, Infection Control Practitioners, Occupational Health Professionals, Walk-In Clinics/Urgent Care Clinics, Family Health Teams, Pharmacies, Central LHIN, NSM LHIN

Date: September 20, 2019

Healthcare Provider Alert

Local healthcare providers are being advised to ask their patients about their use of electronic cigarettes and vaping products when they present with respiratory symptoms, especially when there isn't an apparent reason for the illness.

The alert comes after the Middlesex-London Health Unit was notified recently of a youth with severe respiratory illness that has been associated with the use of vaping products. The Health Unit received the report shortly after Health Canada released an [information update](#) warning of the potential risk of pulmonary illness associated with vaping. As part of the update, Health Canada is calling on healthcare providers to always ask patients, as part of their general history, whether they use drugs from any source, whether legal or illegal. Additionally, when otherwise healthy patients present with respiratory symptoms, healthcare providers should ask about the use of electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) products—such as devices, liquids, refill pods and/or cartridges—for vaping.

For several months, the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit's Tobacco Enforcement Officers have observed a significant increase in the use of vaping products, particularly among high school-aged youth, raising concerns about the potential long-term health effects that might occur. These observations are consistent with a study of Canadian youth aged 16 to 19 ([published in the British Medical Journal](#)), conducted by the University of Waterloo which found that between 2017 and 2018 vaping among this group increased by 74% to 14.6% from 8.4%. According to the latest data from the US Centres for Disease Control, there have been 530 confirmed and probable cases of lung-related illnesses and seven confirmed deaths linked to vaping in the United States.

On September 18, 2019 Health Minister Christine Elliot released a [statement](#) expressing her concern over the prevalence and possible health consequences of vaping. As a result, Minister Elliot issued a Minister's Order under section 77.7.1 of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* which will require public hospitals in Ontario to provide the Chief Medical Officer of Health with statistical, non-identifying information related to incidences of vaping-related severe pulmonary disease.

Further information on e-cigarettes and vaping can be found on the Simcoe Muskoka District Health unit website found [here](#).

