As Research Indicates an Epidemic of Youth E-Cigarette Use in NH, State Law Amended to Restrict Youth Use of Vaping Devices

Concord – Highlighting a growing epidemic among adolescents in New Hampshire, e-cigarettes are now the tobacco product most commonly used by youth in the state. According to the 2017 NH Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 24 percent of high school-aged youth reported having used electronic vaping products (including e-cigarettes, e-cigars, e-pipes, vape pipes, vaping pens, e-hookahs, and hookah pens) in the past 30 days. This compares to the national average of 13%.

“The dramatic increase of e-cigarette use among youth in New Hampshire over the past few years puts a new generation at risk for nicotine addiction,” said Tricia Tilley, Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services Deputy Director. “Youth use of any tobacco product, including e-cigarettes, promotes nicotine addiction. All of us interact with youth every day, and we need to do everything we can to address the escalating risk of nicotine addiction for youth. This work requires the participation of parents, educators, health care providers, retailers and policy makers.”

House Bill 511, which recently became law, amends sections of NH RSA 126-K, Youth Access to and Use of Tobacco Products. These amendments:

- Modify the definitions of electronic smoking devices and liquids;
- Clarify that all tobacco product devices, e-cigarettes, or e-liquids are prohibited in any public education facility or grounds; and
- Allow minors who have a registry identification card under RSA 126-X Use Of Cannabis for Therapeutic Purposes to use devices and prescribed medications away from school grounds.

These changes reflect that keeping all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, out of the hands of youth is sound public policy. They will ensure that communities, schools, and law
enforcement have the tools they need to restrict access to tobacco and electronic devices that can harm adolescent development.

The DHHS Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program can assist schools with these changes. For this assistance, additional information, or to set up a school or community presentation, contact the NH Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program at TPCP@dhhs.nh.gov or (603) 271-6891.

###