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IT'S TIME TO TALK ABOUT THE DANGERS OF E-CIGARETTES

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As the father of a child nearing middle school, one of my biggest daily worries is his health and safety, a concern I think we share. Unfortunately, after decades of progress in the fight against tobacco use and cigarette smoking, a new health threat has emerged on the horizon. E-cigarette use is skyrocketing among our youth, with horrifying but preventable health consequences and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is urging parents to protect themselves and their families from this danger.

We are learning just how dangerous these devices may be, and the long-term health impacts remain unknown at this time. To date, more than 805 case reports of lung injury associated with e-cigarettes, also known as vaping-associated pulmonary injury (VAPI), have been reported nationally. 17 of these cases have resulted in death, and the number is growing every week. There have been 16 case reports of VAPI and one death potentially related to the use of e-cigarettes in Los Angeles County alone.

As the popularity of e-cigarettes rises, especially among teens and young adults, I am compelled to warn our 10 million residents that the risks of using these devices, with or without nicotine, marijuana, or some street concoction, may now include severe lung injury leading to death. Symptoms include coughing, difficulty breathing, fever, vomiting and diarrhea. If you or your child experiences these symptoms, please seek medical attention immediately. Please read the attached sheet, "Vaping: Frequently Asked Questions," for more information about e-cigarettes.

Prevention begins with a conversation with our children on this new danger to their health. Also, as parents, our children look to us to be the examples. If you don't want your kids to vape, don't vape either. Should you need help quitting, call 1-800-NO-BUTTS. Additional resources are available at <https://laquits.com/vaping> and <https://teen.smokefree.gov/>.

Together, we can reverse this dangerous trend by educating our children.

Sincerely,

Muntu Davis, MD, MPH
Los Angeles County Health Officer