

Keck School of Medicine of USC

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January 9, 2014

The Honorable City Council of the City of Los Angeles
Room 395, City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012



RE: Council File CF-1204-S1 - E-Cigarettes

Honorable Members:

I write to provide comments as Amendments are considered to the Los Angeles Municipal Code related to tobacco products and non-combusted devices for delivering nicotine (i.e., e-cigarettes). I have extensive knowledge of this topic (see attached biosketch).

The scope of tobacco products and other nicotine-delivery devices has changed quickly over the last few years, particularly with the rapid emergence of so-called electronic or e-cigarettes. These are non-combusted devices that deliver nicotine to their users; they generate a nicotine-containing aerosol that contaminates the air around those using them and that settles on surfaces. Given the rapidity with which these devices have entered the marketplace, there is still relatively little data on the extent to which their use contaminates the air and surfaces where they are being used. We can anticipate, however, that people in the vicinity of users of e-cigarettes would possibly breathe in nicotine-containing air and there is a potential for absorption through the skin of nicotine and other contaminants that are on surfaces contacted by people. Nicotine is a "sticky" molecule that tends to be long-lived on materials. Additionally, it does undergo transformations that produce chemicals that increase cancer risk. There is a potential that e-cigarettes could contribute to what is now called thirdhand smoke, referring to the contamination of surfaces and materials by tobacco components and by-products of these components

There are other potential public health issues as well, for which research will be needed. There is a possibility that e-cigarettes could become a pathway or "gateway" to cigarette smoking and nicotine addiction for adolescents and young adults. Recent data from CDC show rising use among youth. Additionally, we do not yet know if e-cigarettes will slow rates of cessation because some smokers who might have stopped smoking will remain addicted to nicotine and use both conventional cigarettes and e-cigarettes. Thus, ready availability of e-cigarettes could have broad public health consequences.

If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jonathan Samet".

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Jonathan M. Samet, M.D., M.S. is Distinguished Professor and Flora L. Thornton Chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California (USC), and Director of the USC Institute for Global Health. Dr. Samet received a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry and Physics from Harvard College, an M.D. degree from the University of Rochester, School of Medicine and Dentistry, and a Master of Science degree in Epidemiology from the Harvard School of Public Health. He is trained in the specialty of internal medicine and in the subspecialty of pulmonary diseases. Dr. Samet's research has addressed active and passive smoking and the effects of inhaled pollutants in the general environment, both indoors and outdoors, and in the workplace. Dr. Samet has served as Editor and Author for Reports of the Surgeon General on Smoking and Health since 1984, receiving the Surgeon General's Medallion in 1990 and 2006 for these contributions. He was the Senior Scientific Editor for the 50th Anniversary 2014 report. He has received the Prince Mahidol Award for Global Health, the Alton Ochsner Award Relating Smoking and Health, the WHO World No Tobacco Day Award, the Doll-Wynder Award from SRNT, and the Edward Livingston Trudeau Medal from the American Thoracic Society/American Lung Association. He currently serves as chair of the Tobacco Products Scientific Advisory Committee (TPSAC) for the Food and Drug Administration. Dr. Samet was elected to the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academy of Sciences in 1997.