

#PotVapingCrisis Talking Points and Facts

Talking Points:

- 82 percent of the cases of illness and at least 3 deaths have been connected to marijuana concentrate (THC) oils.
- At a time when we are investigating the causes of this rash of deaths and illnesses connected to marijuana oils and vapes, all marijuana legalization efforts and THC vaping oil sales should pause.
- When these tragic illnesses and deaths were first reported, SAM raised alarms on the connection to state-legal marijuana vapes while the industry pointed to the black market. SAM's fears were confirmed in a recent report from Massachusetts which found that 6 patients in the state had purchased marijuana vapes from legal dispensaries within the state.
- This is not a black-market issue, it is the result of allowing Big Marijuana - an addiction-for-profit drug industry backed by Big Tobacco and companies like Juul - to mass produce these oils and vapes, along with candies, gummies, and other dangerously potent forms of the drug.

Facts:

- 57 people have died from severe respiratory complications associated with vaping. At least 2,544 related illnesses have been reported across the United States.ⁱ
- 84 percent of the deaths investigated have been associated with marijuana vapes.ⁱⁱ
- Reports link marijuana vapes to 82 percent of the lung illnesses being reported in the wake of the vaping epidemic, with 41 percent of victims reporting marijuana use reported using products that exclusively contained THC.ⁱⁱⁱ
- The CDC found that 16 percent of the THC-containing products linked to the vaping epidemic were obtained from commercial sources such as medical and recreational dispensaries.^{iv}
- Two of the deaths have been connected to marijuana products in Oregon, one of which was associated with marijuana oil purchased at a legal dispensary.^v A third death in Tennessee was linked to a vape purchased at a Colorado dispensary.^{vi} No other states have released information about the kinds of vapes that were linked to the deaths.
- Marijuana vapes linked to EVALI have been reported from state-sanctioned dispensaries in Colorado, Delaware, Massachusetts, Michigan, Oregon, and Washington.^{vii} Massachusetts health officials revealed that 6 cases of lung illnesses related to vaping were tied to the state's "legal" market.
- Though the marijuana industry blames illicit vaporizers exclusively for using vitamin E acetate, one source working within the industry, Andrew Jones of *Mr. Extractor*, has said that 60 to 70 percent of vapes contain vitamin E acetate. Even still, no health official has

pointed to any individual cause.^{viii}

- New York state has issued subpoenas to several vape companies as the investigation mounts; one of these companies is owned by a marijuana business owner who is legally licensed in Michigan.^{ix}
- According to the CDC, 16 percent of the victims of the vaping-related illnesses are under the age of 18. 54 percent of the victims are under the age of 24.^x
- A recent study showed adolescents who vaped were 3.5 times as likely to smoke marijuana.^{xi}
- Since Monitoring the Future (MTF) first began recording vaping trends among young people in 2017, the survey has demonstrated significant increases among key demographics. In 2018, 2.6 percent of 8th graders, 7 percent of 10th graders, and 7.5 percent of 12th graders reported past-month marijuana vaping use. In 2019 the numbers increased to 3.9 percent, 12.6 percent, and 14 percent respectively.^{xii}
- In Arizona, a survey of 50,000 10th and 12th graders found that one quarter (25 percent) of teens were using has used highly potent marijuana concentrates at least once.^{xiv}

i See https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease.html

ii See <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2019/p1028-first-analysis-lung-injury-deaths.html>

iii See https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6902e2.htm?s_cid=mm6902e2_e

iv See https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6902e2.htm?s_cid=mm6902e2_e

v See <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/health/2019/09/05/vaping-death-oregon-man-dies-thc-vape-dispensary/2218501001/>

vi See <https://www.wkrn.com/news/local-news/minnesota-man-identified-as-tennessees-first-vaping-related-death/>

vii See <https://www.wkrn.com/news/local-news/minnesota-man-identified-as-tennessees-first-vaping-related-death/>; <https://www.delawareonline.com/story/news/health/2019/10/03/state-delawarean-believed-have-died-vaping-related-lung-injury/3850705002/>; <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/vaping/not-just-counterfeit-legal-thc-vaping-products-linked-lung-illnesses-n1097011/>; <https://www.toledoblade.com/news/medical/2019/10/18/vaping-respiratory-illness-ban-e-cigarette-lung-raphael-rodriguez/stories/20191018120>; <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/2nd-oregonian-dies-from-vaping-related-illness/>; <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/first-vaping-lawsuit-filed-in-washington-state-by-police-officer-who-says-he-fell-ill-after-vaping-thc/>

viii See <https://www.inverse.com/article/59207-vitamin-e-acetate-thc-vapes>

ix See <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2019/09/09/new-york-subpoena-firms-selling-substances-linked-illicit-vaping-products/>

x See https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease.html

xi See <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/article-abstract/2748383>

xii See <http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/data/18data.html#2018data-drugs>

xiii See <https://www.livescience.com/marijuana-concentrates-teen-use.html>