

September 23, 2019

ATTORNEY GENERAL ENCOURAGES LAWMAKERS TO ADDRESS PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS RELATED TO E-CIGARETTE USE

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today urged members of the Illinois House of Representatives to advance legislation as part of his ongoing efforts to address the public health crisis connected to the use of e-cigarettes.

Raoul testified today before the House Mental Health Committee about the urgent need for the state to pursue a comprehensive approach to protect Illinois residents from the health dangers of using e-cigarettes. Last week, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported an increase in the number of unexplained lung illnesses connected to vaping. The CDC on Thursday reported 530 confirmed or probable cases of lung injury associated with vaping, an increase from 380 cases reported just the week before. According to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), 69 cases of vaping-related illness have been reported in Illinois, including one fatality. An additional 13 cases are under investigation.

"One of my first actions as Attorney General was to task my office's medical director with researching the dangers of e-cigarette use. I am committed to keeping tobacco products out of the hands of youths. It is also why I partnered with DuPage County State's Attorney Bob Berlin to push for a ban on flavored tobacco products," Raoul said. "As a father, I know all too well that a ban on flavored e-cigarettes is only one step we must take to begin addressing this public health crisis. This is a multifaceted problem that requires a multifaceted solution. As my office continues to investigate the e-cigarette industry, I look forward to working with the General Assembly on the policy changes needed to keep our residents safe."

Raoul emphasized the need for comprehensive legislation that includes but goes beyond banning flavored e-cigarette products. Raoul called for evaluating the state's criminal laws and strengthening disclosures on products so that all users – particularly teens – better understand the risks associated with vaping and using e-cigarettes.

Nationally, the reported illnesses have not been linked to any particular e-cigarette or vape product; however, no e-cigarette or vape product has been conclusively eliminated as a potential source of the illnesses. Symptoms experienced by individuals who have become ill range from difficulty breathing, coughing and fatigue, to vomiting and diarrhea. People who have been hospitalized reported that their symptoms worsened in the days or weeks after using e-cigarettes or vape products. Raoul encourages anyone experiencing such symptoms after using e-cigarette products – even if symptoms do not take place instantaneously – to seek immediate medical attention.

The CDC has reported that many patients, including some in Illinois, reported vaping products containing tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) before experiencing symptoms. According to the IDPH, the aerosol created by e-cigarettes can contain harmful ingredients. The Food and Drug Administration has also reported that some people who use e-cigarettes – primarily youth and young adults – have experienced seizures, which are a potential side effect of nicotine toxicity.

The Illinois Attorney General's office has long fought to decrease the use of tobacco and nicotine products, particularly by young people. Last month, the Attorney General and a coalition of attorneys general urged the streaming video industry to adopt policies to protect young viewers from often glamorized tobacco content. Raoul also issued a consumer alert warning people to avoid using e-cigarettes. In May, Attorney General Raoul urged the FDA to strengthen e-cigarette guidance by prioritizing enforcement actions against

flavored e-cigarettes. In June 2018, the Attorney General's office asked the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ban flavored tobacco products.

The Attorney General's office is investigating one of the nation's leading e-cigarette companies, Juul Labs, for possible violations of Illinois' consumer protection laws. According to the Wall Street Journal, Juul sold more than 12 million devices and 390 refill pods in the U.S. during just the first half of 2019. While the Attorney General's investigation into Juul's marketing practices is ongoing, the office is also monitoring the activities of additional e-cigarette companies. For more information and free resources to help quit tobacco, please visit the [Illinois Tobacco Quitline website](#) or call 1-866-QUIT-YES.