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**Electronic (e)-cigarette manufacturers shamelessly promote untested product for use in “smokefree” environments; make false claims about efficacy as cessation device too**

**(BERKELEY, CA)** Proponents of electronic cigarettes, commonly known as “e-cigarettes,” are misleading the public about these products through paid press releases, advertorials, and online social media by making unsubstantiated claims about their benefits and offering deep discounts and coupons to entice people to use them, despite their potential health risks.

E-cigarette manufacturers and proponents appear to be the PR machine behind an onslaught of daily press releases that tout the benefits of e-cigarettes despite a lack of independent peer-reviewed scientific evidence demonstrating the safety or efficacy of the products for smoking cessation. They also ignore or downplay the fact that, far from emitting just “harmless water vapor,” e-cigarettes pollute indoor air with detectable levels of carcinogens and other toxic chemicals.

In addition to press releases, e-cigarette proponents are actively promoting the products with unsubstantiated claims on the internet and social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. In fact, at least one YouTube ad buried the age restriction warning that the viewer must be 18 years or older to view it below the video screen, a placement seemingly designed to be overlooked until after viewing the ad. “What I find most egregious are the direct advertisements with false and misleading claims, including that e-cigarettes are effective smoking cessation devices, that e-cigarette use is permissible in all indoor environments, including venues that are smokefree, and targeting pregnant women claiming that e-cigarettes are safer and healthier than other tobacco products,” said Cynthia Hallett, MPH, Executive Director.

Despite manufacturer claims that e-cigarettes are “safer than commercial tobacco products,” the contents of the e-cigarette liquid and the “vapor mist” that is exhaled by the user remain undisclosed. E-cigarettes are currently an unregulated product, which leaves a great deal of unknowns not only about the health risks, but also about product manufacturing quality and safety. There are several hundred brands of e-cigarettes on the market, and test results vary greatly between brands and even among models from the same brand. In July 2009, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released results of its preliminary analysis of several electronic cigarettes, which found that the cartridges contain carcinogens, including nitrosamines, and toxic chemicals such as diethylene glycol, a component of antifreeze.

Little is known about the contents of the e-cigarette “vapor mist” and any potential health risks to non-users who inhale the vapor. A study recently published in *Indoor Air* measured the contents of exhaled e-cigarette vapor and found that exhaling the vapor releases measurable amounts of carcinogens and toxins into the air, including nicotine, formaldehyde, and acetaldehyde. The authors concluded that e-

cigarettes are a new source of chemical and aerosol exposure and their potential health impact is a concern that should be investigated further. Other researchers have found inconsistent labeling of nicotine content on e-cigarette cartridges, such that cartridges labeled as not having nicotine did in fact contain nicotine, and vice versa, as well as other signs of poor quality control, including leaky cartridges and defective parts.

In what appears to be a direct response to the September 12, 2012 Tobacco Free College Campus Initiative launch at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Esmokehub issued a press release titled, "Esmokehub Presents E-Cigs As Smoking Alternatives to College and University Administrators" without mentioning the research demonstrating that exhaled e-cigarette vapor contains toxic chemicals.

Absent convincing proof that e-cigarettes are harmless to people exposed to the vapors they emit, their use in workplaces and public places should be prohibited. Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights believes that public health officials should make it clear that e-cigarettes are not an acceptable substitute for tobacco products in places that the law requires to be smokefree. "Given their unknown impact on non-users, more communities and states are considering prohibiting e-cigarette use in workplaces and public places, as well as prohibiting their sale to minors," Hallett said.

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*Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights is a national, member-based, not-for-profit organization based in Berkeley, CA that is dedicated to helping nonsmokers breathe smokefree air in enclosed public places and workplaces and exposing tobacco industry and allied interference.*

Learn More:

- 1) <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1600-0668.2012.00792.x/abstract>
- 2) <http://no-smoke.org/learnmore.php?id=645>

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