



Accurate Reporting of Smoking Variants Act

Reps. David Trone (MD-06), Raja Krishnamoorthi (IL-08), and Chris Stewart (UT-02)

The Problem - Americans are using e-cigarettes at alarming rates. While approximately 3% of adults are current users, in 2019, over 10% of middle school students and over 27% of high school students reported using e-cigarettes in the past 30 days. According to the 2020 National Youth Tobacco Survey, over 3.6 million kids were reported to be currently using e-cigarettes. The highly addictive nicotine in e-cigarettes can harm brain development and may increase youths' likelihood of using cigarettes in the future. Repeated prolonged exposure to aerosols found in e-cigarettes and vaping devices poses considerable potential risk. E-cigarettes can also cause serious illness - in the fall of 2019, the U.S. experienced a mysterious spate of lung injuries associated with vaping marijuana products. According to the CDC, over 2,807 individuals have been hospitalized or have died from "e-cigarette, or vaping, product use-associated lung injuries" (EVALI) from marijuana vaping. Sixty-eight individuals have died from EVALI, across 29 states and the District of Columbia.

Despite the prevalence of e-cigarette use among youths and the serious potential side effects, electronic health records (EHR) currently do not provide options for recording use of e-cigarettes, water pipes, and other types of smoking. Without this prompting in EHRs, providers may not ask about use of these devices, potentially resulting in under-reporting, a missed opportunity to address this behavior with patients, and a dearth of data that can be used to understand long-term health outcomes.

The Solution - Pass the Accurate Reporting of Smoking Variants Act, which would ensure that electronic health records include options for vaping, water pipes, and other types of smoking, in addition to cigarettes and cigars. This would enable providers and researchers to better understand the prevalence of use of cigarette alternatives.

What does the Accurate Reporting of Smoking Variants Act do?

The legislation would require the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology to develop strategies to ensure that electronic health records include options for vaping, water pipes, and other types of smoking to enhance accurate data collection and timely reporting. This would enable providers and researchers to better understand the prevalence of use of cigarette alternatives.