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For Immediate Release

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LUNG DISEASE AMONG TEENS WHO REPORTED VAPING

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services is investigating cases of severe lung disease among teens who have reported vaping. During July 2019, 8 cases of severe pulmonary disease among adolescents were reported to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS). Patients resided in the counties of Milwaukee, Waukesha, and Winnebago and presented with respiratory symptoms including cough, shortness of breath, and fatigue. Symptoms worsened over a period of days or weeks before admission to the hospital. Currently, the names and types of products used are unknown.

"E-cigarette and vaping products can contain toxic chemicals that can damage lungs and impact brain development," said Margaret Gesner, Health Officer of Central Racine County Health Department. Dottie-Kay Bowersox, Public Health Administrator for the City of Racine Public Health Department says, "Because these products are still new, the long-term health effects are not fully understood."

According to the Surgeon General, e-cigarettes include harmful ingredients such as heavy metals, nicotine, flavorants linked to lung disease, and ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs.

E-cigarette companies target youth in a variety of ways including use of kid friendly flavors, celebrity endorsements, and packaging that mimics candy and snack foods. Brain development continues until age 25, putting children at greater risk for permanent brain damage, developing addictions, and becoming addicted to other substances.

For more information, including tips for parents and caregivers on how to talk to your children about vaping, please visit www.crchd.com/health-education, www.cityofracine.org/health, or www.tobaccoischanging.com.

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