



Submission on behalf of the Paediatric Society of New Zealand (PSNZ)

Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products (Smoked Tobacco) Amendment Bill

This bill proposes to significantly limit the number of retailers able to sell smoked tobacco products; aims to prevent young people from taking up smoking by prohibiting the sale of smoked tobacco products to anyone born on or after 1 January 2009; and aims to make smoked tobacco products less appealing and addictive.

Who are we

The Paediatric Society of New Zealand Te Kāhui Mātai Arotamariki o Aotearoa is a professional body of >500 doctors, nurses, allied health clinicians, officials and managers working to improve the health and wellbeing of tamariki and rangatahi in Aotearoa. We were founded in 1947 and are a not-for-profit membership organisation. We support many clinical networks focused on specific areas of practice.

The Paediatric Society of New Zealand Te Kāhui Mātai Arotamariki o Aotearoa:

- Supports the Smoke free Aotearoa Action Plan in restricting access to smoked tobacco products, reduces the appeal and addictiveness of smoked tobacco products and introducing a requirement that general retailers must advise the Director-General of Health of their intention to sell vaping products.
- Believes that in addition to a smoke free generation, Aotearoa New Zealand should develop a Youth focussed strategy which strives towards a nicotine free generation who are both smoke free AND vape free.
- Supports the development of funded clinical services who can support young people who wish to reduce their use of vaping

Recommendations

The PSNZ supports the Smokefree Aotearoa Action Plan as this relates to reducing the harms from exposure to tobacco products and reduces the appeal and addictiveness of tobacco products. This is likely to have positive impact on young people with less young people starting smoking with long term positive health gains. We support the actions which support a 'Smokefree' Generation.

The PSNZ also supports the proposed legislation to introduce the requirement for retailers to inform of their intention to sell vaping products. This could support more knowledge about the geographical locations and enforcement of underage purchasing.

The PSNZ agrees with the Ministry of Health that young people should not vape and people who do not smoke should not vape.

The PSNZ believes there should be considerable more focus on reducing the harm from vaping on youth.

We believe that in addition to the Smoke Free Action Plan, there should stronger and more specific strategy focussed on reducing the harms from vaping for young people who are non-smokers. A separate strategy, informed by youth health clinicians, Paediatric epidemiologists

and public health physicians, youth AOD and mental health clinicians, paediatricians and young people should be developed and implemented.

The significant increase in vaping use in non-smokers is disproportionately impacting young people, especially rangatahi Māori and Pasifica youth. The 2021 ASG survey indicates 9.6% of Year 10 students are vaping daily (ASH survey, 2021). It is clinically likely that a proportion of these young people are vaping daily as they have nicotine withdrawal symptoms.

Frontline clinicians in Paediatrics and Youth Health are now seeing young people in their clinical work who have never smoked and who are vaping regularly. Some are vaping regularly and have symptoms of nicotine withdrawal. For some this is impacting on functioning at home and with educational engagement. The potential harms from vaping on educational engagement are being seen by front line clinicians working with young people on a regular basis. For example, leaving classrooms to vape due to nicotine withdrawal symptoms impacts on educational engagement and achievement.

Clinicians working with young people need clinical guidelines and funded clear referral pathways for young people who wish to reduce vaping as Stop Smoking services and AOD services are not funded to be able to provide this service.

Young people who wish to reduce vaping deserve funded, easily accessible wrap around supports for reducing or quitting vaping.

The Ministry of Health position statement on vaping states: despite some experimentation with vaping products among never smokers, vaping products are attracting very few people who have never smoked into regular vaping, including young people.

A Youth Vaping Ministry of Health Position statement should be developed to guide policy as the current statement above from the Ministry of Health position statement on vaping is not correct with regards to young people and should be updated given recent data.

Thank you for your review of this submission.