

133 Molesworth Street
PO Box 5013
Wellington 6140
New Zealand
T+64 4 496 2000

14 October 2024

D Towell

By email: fyi-request-28409-ca7e8e8d@requests.fyi.org.nz
Ref: H2024051745

Tēnā koe D

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health – Manatū Hauora (the Ministry) on 16 September 2024. You requested:

“Please can I request copies of:

** All Briefings / memos / any other titled correspondence to Associate Ministers and Ministers for the period 2014-2024 which specifically relate to:*

- 1. Vaping use/advice/stats in NZ*
- 2. Cigarette use/advice/stats in NZ*

** Any statistics held relating to the use of cigarettes and vaping devices in NZ between 2014-2024 - if possible, broken down into years and age groups.*

To include: what percentage of the population smokes / vapes, the frequency of use, the quantity of nicotine products being consumed.

Statistics for the past ten years (2014-2024) concerning the number of medical conditions linked to, or suspected to be linked to, vaping devices.

Specifically:

** The number of E-cigarette or vaping associated lung injuries (EVALI) (US CDC term)*

** If not classed as EVALI, the number of patients with collapsed lungs, pneumonia, or other lung related instances due to, or where vaping is suspected to be a contributory factor of, vaping.*

** The number of heart related conditions, due to, or where vaping is suspected to be a contributory factor of, vaping.*

Has the Ministry of Health provided any Minister or Associate Minister between 2014-2024 with research outlining the negative effects of vaping?

If so, please provide copies of this.

Has the Ministry of Health advised any Minister or Associate Minister between 2014-2024 of any of the following facts/research findings:

1. 33 Countries That Have Banned the Sale of Vapes/Electronic Cigarettes

2. The US National Health Institutes of Health (NIH) research which states:

a. E-cigarette use increases an individual's chance of using combustible cigarettes.

b. Adolescents who use e-cigarettes are 3.6 times more likely to report using combustible cigarettes later in life.

- c. Teens have also been shown to be more susceptible to addiction.
- d. We know that nicotine addiction often originates in adolescence with studies showing that close to 90% of adult daily smokers started before the age of 18.¹⁰ Thus, e-cigarettes are effectively helping to create a new generation addicted to nicotine.
- e. Even in the absence of high nicotine levels in these products, users are exposed to toxic chemicals – chemicals identified as carcinogenic – created by the vaping of the humectant or flavors.
- f. Adolescents should never use e-cigarette or vaping products:

3. The World Health Organisation research / findings which state

- a. Non-smoking young people who use ENDS (ENDS: electronic nicotine delivery system) are more likely to become cigarette smokers, exposing them to the harmful effects of smoking, including addiction to tobacco.
- b. ENDS are undoubtedly harmful.
- c. ENDS use among children and adolescents under the age of 20 years is of concern in many countries, not only because of the detrimental effects of nicotine in this age group but also because most young ENDS users are non-tobacco users.
- d. ENDS undermine tobacco control progress and threaten smoke-free environments.
- e. The use of ENDS risks renormalizing smoking behaviour, particularly among younger populations.
- f. E-cigarettes with nicotine are highly addictive and are harmful to health. Whilst long-term health effects are not fully understood, it has been established that they generate toxic substances, some of which are known to cause cancer and some that increase the risk of heart and lung disorders.
- g. Use of e-cigarettes can also affect brain development and lead to learning disorders for young people.
- h. Fetal exposure to e-cigarettes can adversely affect the development of the fetus in pregnant women.
- i. Exposure to emissions from e-cigarettes also poses risks to bystanders.
- j. Children 13–15-years old are using e-cigarettes at rates higher than adults in all WHO regions. In Canada, the rates of e-cigarette use among 16–19-year-olds has doubled between 2017–2022, and in England (the United Kingdom) the number of young users has tripled in the past three years.
- k. Cessation strategies should be based on the best available evidence of efficacy, to go with other tobacco control measures and subject to monitoring and evaluation. Based on the current evidence, it is not recommended that governments permit sale of e-cigarettes as consumer products in pursuit of a cessation objective.
- l. High quality epidemiology studies consistently demonstrate that e-cigarettes use increases conventional cigarette uptake, particularly among non-smoking youth, by nearly 3 times.
- m. There is growing evidence that ENDS could be associated with lung injuries.
- n. Both tobacco products and ENDS pose risks to health. The safest approach is not to use either.
- o. E-cigarettes as consumer products have not been proven to be effective for cessation at the population level. Instead, alarming evidence on adverse population health effects is mounting.
- p. The promotion of e-cigarettes has led to marked increases in e-cigarette use by children and adolescents, with rates exceeding adult use in many countries.”

On 7 and 10 October 2024, the Ministry contacted you asking for a refinement of your request as it was currently worded, was for a large volume of information and may be refused under section 18(f) of the Act as the information sought cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. As the Ministry has not received a response from you, your request for information is refused under section 18(f) of the Act.

However, you may be interested in proactively released information such as briefings sent to Ministers or Cabinet papers on this topic. These can be found on the Ministry of Health website, and often contain advice and statistics related to vaping and cigarette use:

www.health.govt.nz/information-releases

You may also be interested in recent Cabinet material relating to the Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products Amendment Bill 2024: Addressing Youth Vaping, which is publicly available here: www.health.govt.nz/information-releases/cabinet-material-smokefree-environments-and-regulated-products-amendment-bill-2024-addressing-youth

The Ministry remains willing to work with you on a refined request.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request with us, including this decision, please feel free to contact the OIA Services Team on: oiagr@health.govt.nz.

Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Manatū Hauora website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests

Nāku noa, nā



Jane Chambers
Group Manager, Public Health Policy and Regulation
Public Health Agency | Te Pou Hauora Tūmatanui