

PACE Health Access provides outreach and application help to those applying for Medicaid, Connector Care & Medicare

NEED HEALTH INSURANCE?

You can apply for health insurance today!

- Have you had a change in your marital status?
- Did you have a baby?
- Did you recently lose your insurance coverage?
- Are you looking to find more affordable health Insurance?

PACE HEALTH ACCESS provides trained Health Connector Navigators to help you with your insurance questions and will assist you with your application for your health insurance coverage.

In addition, the Senior Health Specialist can assist anyone over 65 with their applications for Medicare Part A, part B, and part D; Medigap insurance, Medicare HMOs, retiree insurance plans, prescription drug programs, Medicaid and Medicare.

Please call 508-999-9920 or stop by our office:

PACE, 166 William Street, New Bedford, MA

Appointments and Walk Ins Welcome.

Don't Wait – We can help you today!

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Massachusetts State Officials Announce Coronavirus Preparation Measures

Closely Coordinating with Federal Officials, Boston Public Health Commission, and Other Local Health Departments and Our Health Care System to Keep Residents Safe

On Friday, the Department of Public Health and Massport detailed ongoing steps being taken to ensure the Commonwealth is prepared to respond to the 2019 novel coronavirus. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified Boston Logan International Airport as one of 20 additional airports that will have enhanced screening for passengers arriving from China, beginning in the coming days. To date, there have been no confirmed cases of 2019 novel coronavirus in Massachusetts and the risk to residents remains low.

The novel coronavirus has resulted in thousands of confirmed human infections in more than 20 countries, with more than 99 percent of cases in China. To date, six cases have been confirmed in the US, two individuals in California, two individuals in Illinois and one individual each in Washington State and Arizona. Again, to date there have been no confirmed cases in Massachusetts.

On Friday, US Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar declared the 2019 novel coronavirus a public health emergency and ordered any US citizens returning from the center of the outbreak in China to be quarantined for two weeks. This followed a declaration Thursday by the World Health Organization that the coronavirus outbreak is a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. Also that day the CDC reported the first case of person-to-person transmission in

Illinois. Massachusetts state health officials, in conjunction with Massport and local health departments, have responded to prevent the spread of the virus.

Among the steps taken by the Department of Public Health:

- Established an Incident Command Structure to facilitate the dissemination of information from federal and state partners to statewide stakeholders regularly.
- Launched a new website that provides up-to-date information on the status of novel coronavirus for all residents: <https://www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus>.
- Developed and disseminated clinical advisories to all Massachusetts health care providers and issued guidance to hospitals, health systems and Emergency Medical Services.
- Scheduled calls with other key health care partners including local boards of health.

“Our priority is protecting public health as we work with our state and federal partners to provide the most up to date information and guidance to our residents,” said Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel, MD, MPH. “We understand that this new virus is causing public concern, but I want to reassure people that at this time, the risk to Massachusetts residents remains low.”

As announced earlier this week, the CDC was to begin enhanced screening of passengers who have traveled to Boston Logan International Airport from China. As part of its daily responsibilities, US Customs and Border Patrol conducts a passive screening for signs of illness of all passengers entering the US.

Logan was identified as one of 20 US airports where officials from the CDC will start to screen international passengers for symptoms and signs of novel coronavirus. This is in addition to the 5 airports where enhanced screening is already underway. Logan International Airport has three daily non-stop flights from China: Beijing, Shanghai, and Hong Kong. Logan

Airport does not have any flights originating in Wuhan, China or Hubei Province.

With the US government's declaration Friday of a public health emergency, which includes limiting arrivals from China to just a handful of airports, starting Sunday, Feb. 2, the plans for Logan International Airport could change.

Coronaviruses are respiratory viruses and are generally spread through respiratory secretions (droplets from coughs and sneezes) of an infected person to another person. Symptoms of novel coronavirus include: fever, cough and shortness of breath, and in severe cases, pneumonia (fluid in the lungs). Information about how this novel coronavirus spreads is still limited.

Although the risk of the coronavirus to Massachusetts residents remains low, people are advised to take many of the same steps they do to help prevent colds and the flu, including:

- Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Stay home when feeling sick.

Clinicians who see patients with recent travel in China, especially Hubei Province, who have a fever, lower respiratory tract symptoms (such as shortness of breath and cough), and/or contact with a known novel coronavirus patient, should contact DPH 24/7 at (617) 983-6800 for assistance. Further clinical guidance can be found in our Clinical Advisory.

The new DPH website provides relevant up-to-date information on the status of novel coronavirus for all residents: <https://www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus>.

Additional details and guidance regarding the novel Coronavirus, is available from the CDC: 2019 Novel

Coronavirus.

New Bedford's 5th annual "Love Your Heart" Day will offer free blood pressure screenings

Local residents are invited to participate in the 5th annual Love Your Heart Day, happening on Sunday February 9th from 9:00am to 1:00pm. Communities and neighborhoods throughout the City of New Bedford will once again join a growing, national movement to "Love Your Heart".

More than a dozen locations citywide will offer free blood pressure screenings. Individuals will have a chance to "know their numbers," learn of any potential risks for harm, and receive educational materials and guidance on what to do to both improve and/or maintain optimal heart health. Each site will be staffed with trained volunteers to administer the screenings.

Lead organizer Dr. Michael Rocha, cardiologist at Hawthorn Medical Associates and Director of the New Bedford Wellness Initiative says that 4 out of 5 heart attacks can be prevented through regular exercise, smoking cessation, stress reduction, and a healthy diet – all of which help to control blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol. Further, he adds that roughly 30% of adults have high blood pressure yet only about 50% have it under control. This can lead to heart attacks, strokes, heart failure and kidney disease. Love Your Heart Day aims to reduce and prevent these issues.

Love Your Heart NB engages various community partners in healthcare, the fire and police community, universities, city government, nonprofits, and the business community. For a list of participating sites and locations, visit www.nbewell.com.

Love Your Heart is an initiative that was originally started by the County of San Diego in California. The event has expanded into communities across the West Coast and South into Mexico. New Bedford remains the first and only location in the East Coast to fully implement the initiative.



LOVE YOUR HEART

Sunday February 9, 2020
9:00AM – 1:00PM

"Join the Heart Health Movement!"

FREE BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENINGS

Visit participating sites across New Bedford
for the 5th annual Love Your Heart event!

For more information, visit nbewell.com



Massachusetts public health officials confirm fourth death from a vaping-associated lung injury

A fourth person has died of a vaping-associated lung injury, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) announced today. The patient, a man in his 70s from Middlesex County, reported vaping tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), an ingredient found in marijuana. The case is among the 36 confirmed cases of e-cigarette or vaping-associated lung injury (EVALI) that DPH has reported to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) since September 11, 2019, when the state began requiring clinicians to report any unexplained lung injury in a patient to the department.

Since the state began mandating the report, DPH has received 341 reports from clinicians of suspected vaping-associated lung injuries. Of those, 109 cases of EVALI have been identified, with 36 confirmed cases and 73 probable cases reported to the CDC.

“Today’s news is a tragic reminder that we must remain vigilant about the dangers of vaping,” said Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel, MD, MPH. “There are resources available to help people quit and we encourage anyone to use these resources.”

In November, DPH reported the death of a man in his 50s from Worcester County who reported vaping both nicotine and THC. In October, the state reported the vaping-associated lung injury deaths of a woman in her 40s from Middlesex County and a woman in her 60s from Hampshire County, both of whom vaped nicotine.

In December, the state’s Public Health Council approved new

regulations that restrict the sale of nicotine vaping and flavored vaping and tobacco products. This action followed the Legislature's passing and Governor Charlie Baker's signing into law an Act Modernizing Tobacco Control, which provided DPH with additional authority to regulate access to tobacco and electronic nicotine delivery systems, including vapes.

The state's Cannabis Control Commission has also taken steps to strengthen its regulation of marijuana vaping products. As part of an ongoing investigation to determine whether Massachusetts licensees may be connected to lung injury cases, the Commission has entered into a data-sharing agreement with DPH and continues to test samples of quarantined vaping products. So far Independent Testing Labs have not found detectable levels of vitamin E acetate in products manufactured by licensed Marijuana Establishments or Medical Marijuana Treatment Centers. The US Centers for Disease Control has identified vitamin E acetate as a chemical of concern among people with e-cigarette, or vaping, product use associated lung injury.

The Commission maintains a quarantine order on all marijuana vaporizer products, except for devices used exclusively to vape flower that were manufactured by licensees prior to December 12, 2019. Newly manufactured vaping products are authorized to be sold only after they have passed tests for the presence of impermissible levels of toxicants or contaminants, including vitamin E acetate and heavy metals.

Of the 109 Massachusetts confirmed or probable cases that have been reported to the CDC, 55 are male and 54 are female. Fifty-two percent are under the age of 30. Thirty-five percent vaped only nicotine, 40 percent vaped only THC, and 27 percent reported vaping nicotine and THC. DPH's online dashboard posted weekly provides detailed information on vaping cases that the Department has reported to the CDC.

DPH offers resources to help people quit through the

Massachusetts Smoker's Helpline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW or by visiting makesmokinghistory.org or Mass.gov/QuitVaping to connect to treatment. The Helpline has doubled the availability of free over-the-counter nicotine replacement products from 4 weeks to 8 weeks, once a person receives counseling by phone.

As of January 1, 2020, Massachusetts commercial health insurance plans, plus the Group Insurance Commission and MassHealth, must cover smoking cessation counseling and FDA-approved products such as gum, lozenges, or patches without cost-sharing.

Five major U.S. airports report exposure of commuters to measles virus

Five of the nation's busiest airports have reported the extremely contagious measles infection to its patrons: Richmond's International Airport in Virginia, Denver International Airports, Austin-Bergstrom International Airport in Texas, Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) and Chicago's O'Hare International Airport.

In Austin, Texas health officials stated that one person alone may be responsible for infecting thousands as the unnamed person traversed the city visiting a supermarket and area restaurants over a four-day span before flying off to the O'Hare International Airport in Chicago and spreading it further. It has been two decades since Austin had a single reported case.

What makes the measles virus particularly dangerous is that 9 out of 10 people are not immune, it is more contagious than most diseases, and an infected person may be unaware that they are carrying the virus since it may take up to two weeks to exhibit major symptoms. In that time, an individual spreads the virus with those they share living space with, any direct contact with the mouth or nasal secretions, and with each sneeze and/or cough.

Generally, within 4 days a blotchy, red rash will appear on the head and spread from there to the lower part of the body. Other symptoms follow such as diarrhea, feeling achy, fatigue, white spots inside the mouth, coughing, fever, and "pink eye." Though rare it may also cause swelling of the brain and death. Secondary bacterial infections may occur such as ear infections or pneumonia.

While there is no treatment available for the virus, a vaccination for measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) can prevent it. Typically limited to developing areas of the world in Asia and Africa, the virus which affects approximately 20 million people a year is gaining new ground in the United States as the "anti-vaxxer" demographic grows. As of 2018, it was the second leading vaccine-preventable disease that causes death in children with "Whooping Cough" or Pertussis ranked first.

In Massachusetts, there have been three reported cases this year, with the most recent case reported in October in Boston which is the city's first case since 2013. The CDC reported that 2019 has the distinction of having the most confirmed cases of measles infection in the nation since 1992.

For more information about Measles, how it is transmitted, what you can do to prevent it, and more visit [mass.gov/service-details/measles](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/measles)

Five new cases of vaping-related illnesses reported in Massachusetts bringing total to 73

Five new cases of vaping-related illnesses have been reported to Massachusetts health officials bringing the total number in Massachusetts to 73 and nation-wide to over 2,000. Nationally, of the 2,000 cases reported to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 40 have died of which 3 were from Massachusetts.

Half of the reported cases in the Commonwealth occurred in those under the age of 30, a quarter were between 30-49 years of age and the remainder 50 or over. Nearly 60 of the 73 half been hospitalized. 65% of the cases within the state are related to vaporizers with THC – 40% from using the vaporizer with THC alone and 25% from mixing THC and nicotine. Nearly 30% reported using nicotine only.

Federal health officials believe vitamin E acetate is the source of the vaping-related illnesses, but that it is likely there are additional causes so the investigation will continue.

Massachusetts public health officials announce third death from a vaping-associated lung injury

A third person has died of a vaping-associated lung injury, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) announced today. The patient, a man in his 50s from Worcester County, reported vaping both nicotine and tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), an ingredient found in marijuana. The patient is among more than 200 suspected vaping-associated lung injury patients that have been reported to DPH since September when Massachusetts clinicians were mandated to report any unexplained lung injury in a patient with a history of vaping to the department.

Since the state began mandating the reporting of vaping-associated lung injuries on September 11, DPH has received 220 reports from clinicians of suspected vaping-associated lung injuries, 127 of which meet the criteria for investigation by DPH. Ninety-five investigations have been completed and 21 confirmed and 47 probable cases have been reported to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). DPH will report this third confirmed death from a vaping-associated lung injury to the CDC next week.

Last month, DPH reported the state's first two deaths from a vaping-associated lung injury, a woman in her 40s from Middlesex County and a woman in her 60s from Hampshire County, both of whom vaped nicotine.

"My condolences go out to the family of this patient who has died from a vaping-associated lung injury," said Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel, MD, MPH. "This disease is serious and potentially fatal and we are continuing to

investigate the cause.”

Governor Baker declared a public health emergency on September 24 and temporarily banned the sale of vaping products and devices, in response to the growing number of cases of severe lung injuries associated with the use of e-cigarettes and cannabis and nicotine vaping products in Massachusetts and nationally.

Massachusetts clinicians are asked to report to DPH any individual experiencing otherwise unexplained progressive symptoms of shortness of breath, fatigue, chest pain, cough, or weight loss, of any severity, and an abnormal chest imaging study, who also report vaping within 90 days before the onset of symptoms.

In an updated DPH clinical advisory sent this week to Massachusetts clinicians, those who identify a patient with vaping-associated lung injury should ask the patient to retain any vaping material including the device and any partially used vaping product. Patients determined to be confirmed or probable cases will be contacted to see if their products meet the criteria for testing by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Of the 68 Massachusetts confirmed or probable cases that have been reported to the CDC, 31 are male and 37 are female. Fifty percent are under the age of 30 and 50 percent are 30 or older. Thirty-one percent of the people vaped only nicotine, 38 percent vaped only THC, and 25 percent reported vaping nicotine and THC. DPH’s online dashboard provides detailed information on vaping cases that DPH has reported to the CDC. It is updated each Wednesday.

As a result of the vaping ban, the Commonwealth has implemented a statewide standing order for over-the-counter nicotine replacement products that allow adults to access products like gum, lozenges, and patches as a covered benefit

through their insurance without requiring an individual prescription. The Massachusetts Smoker's Helpline (1-800-QUIT NOW) has doubled free over-the-counter nicotine replacement products from four weeks to eight weeks, once a person receives counseling by phone.

Individuals who are vaping are encouraged to call the Massachusetts Smokers' Helpline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit makingsmokinghistory.org or Mass.gov/QuitVaping to connect to treatment.

DEA New England Field Division collects over 46 tons of prescription drugs, vaping items during Prescription Drug Take Back Day

The final tally is in from the 18th National Prescription Drug Take Back Day on October 26, 2019. The Drug Enforcement Administration's New England Field Division and its partners, over the course of four hours, collected 92,875 pounds or over 46 tons of expired, unused, unwanted prescription drugs, electronic vaping devices and cartridges at 606 collection sites throughout New England. This is in comparison to the first National Prescription Drug Take Back Day in September 2010, when the division collected 25,810 pounds of unwanted drugs.

“Thanks to the public 46 tons of unwanted, expired, unused, unwanted prescription drugs, electronic vaping devices, and cartridges have now been taken out of harm’s way across New England,” said DEA Special Agent in Charge Brian D. Boyle.

“These events are only made possible through the hard work of our law enforcement, coalitions, and community partners and DEA thanks each and every one of them for their efforts.”

The following is a breakdown of collected weights in pounds for the six New England States:

CT – 6,958 lbs

MA – 30,959 lbs

ME – 31,180 lbs

NH – 12,266 lbs

RI – 4,778 lbs

VT – 6,734 lbs

Total: 92,875 lbs

OPINION: It’s time to ban smoking or at least fine people who smoke at entrances

America made significant progress against the nasty, destructive, unhealthy habit of smoking cigarettes when states started banning smoking in restaurants, workplaces, and other public spaces. What seems like common sense today wasn’t so in years past – there was a time when smoking was not only considered “cool,” a great way to unwind or relax, and was even recommended by doctors!

If you are longer in the tooth or a fan of history, you are well aware that this recommendation from doctors goes back to the 1930s, was very common through the 50s and still had some potency into the 90s. It took some effort to change society's perception and break the spell from marketing and promotion that was done by "Big Tobacco" and unfortunately it took a lot of people to become unhealthy, get sick and/or die young to nudge that social sentiment.

He's one of the busiest men in town. While his door may say *Office Hours 2 to 4*, he's actually on call 24 hours a day.

The doctor is a scientist, a diplomat, and a friendly sympathetic human being all in one, no matter how long and hard his schedule.

According to a recent Nationwide survey:
MORE DOCTORS SMOKE CAMELS THAN ANY OTHER CIGARETTE

Doctors in every branch of medicine - 113,597 in all - were queried in this nationwide study of cigarette preference. Three leading research organisations made the survey. The gist of the query was - What cigarette do you smoke doctor?

The brand named most was camel!

The rich, full flavor and cool mildness of Camel's superb blend and costlier tobacco seem to have the same appeal to the smoking tastes of doctors as to the millions of other smokers. If you are a Camel smoker, this preference amongst doctors will hardly surprise you. If you're not, well try Camels now.

Your "T-Zone" Will Tell You...

T for Taste...
T for Throat...

that's your proving ground for any cigarette. See if Camels doesn't suit your "T-Zone" to a "T."

Alarming Statistics

According to the Center For Disease Control, smoking leads to 480,000 deaths per year in the United States..."including more

than 41,000 deaths resulting from secondhand smoke exposure." Which should come as no surprise since cigarettes contain such lovelies like rat poison (arsenic), nail polish remover (acetone), household cleaner (ammonia), components of battery acid (cadmium), embalming fluid (Formaldehyde), lead, insecticide (nicotine), et al.

But dying isn't the only marker or characteristic of the damage from smoking: poor quality life, erectile dysfunction, heart disease, COPD, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, and an increased risk for certain eye diseases and tuberculosis, and serious immune system related illnesses. Smoking is related to most of the top ten causes of death in the country. **It is the leading cause of preventable death worldwide.**

While the adverse health effects have been known for decades, it has taken another series of significant efforts to address the effects of second-hand smoke. What a long haul!

Again, it might seem like common sense: if smoking can make you unhealthy, leading to a poorer quality of life, even kill you, then breathing in someone else's smoke would also be unhealthy and kill you quicker. However, the general populace was just overcoming the idea that the lie that it was a great way to relax, was healthy and even cool and still had much more to learn. Baby steps, apparently.



World Health
Organization

TOBACCO THREATENS US ALL

HEALTH &
ECONOMIC
IMPACTS

TOBACCO KILLS PEOPLE EVERY YEAR

MORE THAN
7
MILLION

TOBACCO THREATENS HEALTH, ECONOMIES AND DEVELOPMENT.



12% OF DEATHS OF ALL PEOPLE AGED **OVER 30** ARE DUE TO TOBACCO.



GLOBAL ANNUAL COSTS FROM TOBACCO USE ARE **US\$1.4 TRILLION** IN **HEALTHCARE** EXPENDITURE AND LOST PRODUCTIVITY FROM ILLNESS AND PREMATURE DEATH.

#NOTOBACCO

Adverse Societal Affects

On top of being aware of the negative health effects to the smoker and those around them, there is the damage it does to all of society and the significant benefits of banning it in public spaces. There are fewer fire hazards, reduced health care costs, less strain on ventilation systems which also is easier on business expenses, it promotes a healthier environment and hygiene especially in businesses where food is served, actually benefits local businesses through making a company more attractive to potential employees, less litter, and has even been shown to reduce premature births.

Then there is the callousness, indifference, and ignorance of those smokers who stand at or near entrances to restaurants and shops and toss their butts, wrappers, and empty packs on the ground. Can they really be that oblivious that non-smokers still have to walk through their disgustingly smelly cloud of cancer-causing smoke to get in and out? I see this every day and people even smoke 3 feet away from "No Smoking!" signs. I can't believe that this isn't obvious to smokers, so I have to consider the option that it is their way of saying "F*** you!" to the lawmakers that pushed them outside of public places.

It is a nasty, nasty habit.

However, in any progressive society, there should be compassion and understanding, right? Obvious consideration has to be made for the addictive nature of cigarette smoking. Millions of people are struggling to kick the habit and it's not an easy one.



Saddest of all is that in spite of all the information out there, new people are picking up that habit at an early age and we need to have some understanding and compassion there too. We have all made foolish, even stupid decisions when we were young, but addiction is something hard enough for a

matured mind to deal with let alone that of a teenager or twenty-something.

The most alarming statistic when it comes to youths is that **every day**, more than 3,000 teenagers a year smoke their first cigarette. So the ranks are swelling.

Support, information, help is in abundance – No Excuse!

Having said that, there are support groups, more than enough information on preventing or kicking the habit, pharmaceuticals, anecdotes, and experiences from those who successfully dumped the habit to use as a model, and other means to put an end to the smoking once and for all. As a society, we have no need for smoking and it is time for it to go the way of the Dodo.

Worldwide, the estimated health care cost is an astounding, mind-boggling \$1.4 Trillion. In the U.S. it is \$300 billion a year with \$156 billion in lost productivity due to premature death and exposure to secondhand smoke. By contrast, the annual cost of alcohol-related crashes totals more than \$44 billion.



You will see a lot of effort to spread awareness on drunken driving especially with youths, there are countless organizations, and social condemnation aplenty, yet how much

effort, how many organizations and social condemnation is there for smoking which costs more than **seven** times as much?

A peep in comparison.

Between 1999 and 2016, 572,537 people died of gunshots. At 480,000 deaths per year from smoking, it takes about 15 years worth of gunshot rates to be equivalent. In fact, more people die from second-hand smoke than gunshots in one year. Yet, you'll find far, far more support, spreading of awareness and outrage for a cause that kills fewer people.

What does that say about society in general? Do we need gimmicks, viral videos on social media, and marketing for something to finally be deemed important enough for our attention?

Cigarettes need to be banned and only allowed for current smokers under the condition that they are in treatment. Within a generation, smoking can be made extinct and society a better place. Less of a financial burden on the country, less stress on the medical system, better productivity in the nation's workplaces, a better quality of life and we would free up that \$300 billion to use for the betterment of society and the world.

The Healing Time Line

A realistic look at how long it takes for your body to recover after your last puff



Benefits For All

Can you think of what the world can do with an extra \$1.4 Trillion? Or what our country can do with an extra \$300 billion dollars a year? Can you think of some community programs and outreaches, youth programs, educational programs, homeless centers, medical research for cures, animal shelters, non-profits, et al that could benefit?

I sure can.

The attempts to get rid of smoking by simply handing out the information and putting a warning label on products is lame, impotent, vain and downright absurd.

For any ban to work, history has shown, e.g. Prohibition, that it needs overwhelming societal support. "Big Tobacco" has enough money to invest in other industries while the last generation of smokers dies out. Of course, they don't want that and won't budge without the government banning cigarettes and pressure from us.

It is one of the most horrendous, tragedies of modern times and it is time to put a nail in its coffin. There is nothing beneficial or positive about cigarette smoking – for the

smoker, the non-smoker, the environment, for society, for anyone and anything. It serves no useful purpose whatsoever, it's not sexy, it's not cool, it's a disgusting and ignorant habit.

It's time for it to go.

Massachusetts Public Health announces the state's second death from a vaping-associated lung injury

A second person has died of a vaping-associated lung injury, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) announced today. The patient, a woman in her 40s from Middlesex County who vaped nicotine, is among more than 200 suspected vaping-associated lung injury patients that have been reported to DPH since September when Massachusetts began requiring clinicians to immediately report any unexplained lung injury in a patient with a history of vaping to the department.

Earlier this month, DPH reported the state's first death from a vaping-associated lung injury, a woman in her 60s from Hampshire County who also vaped nicotine.

"I am deeply saddened to learn about the death of a second patient from this lung injury," said Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel, MD, MPH. "While we continue to work with our federal partners to investigate the cause of these vaping-associated lung injuries, we cannot at this time attribute a single substance or product to this outbreak of

illness.”

Governor Baker declared a public health emergency on September 24 and temporarily banned the sale of vaping products and devices, in response to the growing number of cases of severe lung injuries associated with the use of e-cigarettes and cannabis and nicotine vaping products in Massachusetts and nationally.

Since the state began mandating the reporting of vaping-associated lung injuries on September 11, DPH has received 204 reports from clinicians of suspected vaping-associated lung injuries. Of those 204 reports, 20 confirmed and 41 probable cases have been reported to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). DPH will report this second confirmed death from a vaping-associated lung injury to the CDC next week.

Clinicians are asked to report any individual experiencing otherwise unexplained progressive symptoms of shortness of breath, fatigue, chest pain, cough, or weight loss, of any severity, and an abnormal chest imaging study, who also reports vaping within the 90 days prior to the onset of symptoms.

Of the 61 Massachusetts cases that have been reported to the CDC, 27 are male and 34 are female. A majority of the cases—51 percent – are under the age of 30. Thirty percent of the people vaped only nicotine, 39 percent vaped only tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), an ingredient found in marijuana, while 25 percent reported vaping nicotine and THC. [DPH's new online dashboard](#) provides detailed information on vaping cases that DPH has reported to the CDC and is updated each Wednesday.

As a result of the vaping ban, the Commonwealth has implemented a statewide standing order for over-the-counter nicotine replacement products that allow people to access

products like gum, lozenges, and patches as a covered benefit through their insurance without requiring an individual prescription.

Individuals who are vaping are encouraged to call the [Massachusetts Smokers' Helpline](#) at 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit makingsmokinghistory.org or Mass.gov/QuitVaping to connect to treatment.