



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Written Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health  
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By  
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SB 404 – RELATING TO CHAPTER 245, HAWAII REVISED STATUTES

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Nishihara, and Members of the Committee:

The UH Cancer Center is one of only 69 institutions in the U.S. that hold the prestigious National Cancer Institute (NCI) designation, and is the only NCI-designated center in the Pacific. The NCI designation provides greater access to federal funding and research opportunities. More importantly, it gives the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific region access to innovative and potentially life-saving clinical trials without the necessity of traveling to the mainland.

Our passion at the UH Cancer Center is to be a world leader in eliminating cancer through research, education and improved patient care. Because tobacco consumption is a leading preventable cause of cancer, we take all issues related to tobacco in Hawai'i very seriously. Whereas the UH Cancer Center always has supported strong tobacco control measures in Hawai'i, the recent emergence of electronic smoking devices presents new challenges for tobacco control and tobacco-related legislation.

The UH Cancer Center perspective on electronic smoking devices is based upon data recently obtained from Hawai'i adolescents and young adults who are participants in **original research conducted by our own faculty**. Research conducted in Hawai'i high schools by Thomas Wills, PhD, has confirmed that rates of e-cigarette use by Hawai'i adolescents are at least double the rate of e-cigarette use observed in studies of mainland adolescents. Furthermore, his study published in the peer-reviewed journal *Pediatrics* clarified a reason why e-cigarette use is growing nationally among teens, as his data suggest that e-cigarettes may be operating to recruit lower-risk adolescents to smoking. And recently Pallav Pokhrel, PhD, and Thaddeus Herzog, PhD, published on the topic of e-cigarettes and motivation to quit smoking. Drs. Pokhrel and Herzog also assessed differences between smokers who used e-cigarettes to quit versus those who used FDA-approved nicotine replacement therapy. Additionally, these researchers have published on the effects of e-cigarette marketing on harm perceptions, as well as e-cigarette use expectancies and their impact on e-cigarette use among young adults.

**This research is vital to gaining an evidence-based understanding of what drives acceptance of this emerging technology, what users believe regarding its safety, and what the consequences are for adolescents, whose brains are particularly susceptible to nicotine.**

We believe that e-cigarette use is detrimental to a person's health and that this risk is particularly significant for adolescents and young adults. We encourage the legislature to continue to support research related to electronic smoking behaviors and studies examining long-term health effects. Research from the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center faculty suggests that reducing the use of electronic smoking devices will improve the health of the people of Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.