

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

September 4, 2019

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Steve Weiss, American Heart Association, 202-785-7905

Jamie Poslosky, American Academy of Pediatrics, 202-347-8600

Jared Burkhart, American Academy of Pediatrics Michigan Chapter, 517-484-3013

Mike VanDenHeuvel, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, 202-585-3246

Allison MacMunn, American Lung Association, 312-801-7628

Boot Bullwinkle, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, 202-296-5469

Nicole Dueffert, Truth Initiative, 202-454-5589

Leading Health Groups Back Michigan Gov. Whitmer's Emergency Action to Address the Youth E-Cigarette Epidemic

Statement of the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Pediatrics Michigan Chapter, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, American Heart Association, American Lung Association, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and Truth Initiative

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has taken necessary and appropriate emergency action to address the growing epidemic of youth e-cigarette use by suspending sales of all flavored e-cigarettes in the state. The need for action is even more urgent in light of the recent outbreak of severe lung illnesses associated with e-cigarette use and the failure of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to take strong regulatory action such as prohibiting the sale of the flavored products nationwide that have attracted shocking numbers of our nation's youth. We support Gov. Whitmer's forceful action to protect Michigan's kids.

The youth e-cigarette epidemic is nothing short of a public health emergency that must be urgently confronted. E-cigarette use soared by 78 percent among high school students and 48 percent among middle school students nationwide from 2017-2018. More than 3.6 million middle- and high-school students used e-cigarettes last year – an increase of 1.5 million over the previous year – and public health authorities warn that these numbers likely have continued to rise. Research shows that 97 percent of current youth e-cigarette users used a flavored product in the past month, and 70 percent cite flavors as a key reason for their use.

Now, health authorities are investigating reports of severe respiratory illnesses associated with e-cigarette use in at least 215 people – many of whom are youth and young adults – in 25 states. The possible cases include one death in Illinois, and federal officials have not yet determined the exact cause.

We have long called on the FDA to exercise strict regulatory oversight of e-cigarettes. In the absence of strong federal regulation, parents have been blindsided by the e-cigarette epidemic and children have been lured by the tobacco industry's savvy online marketing campaigns promoting flavors – more than 15,000 on the market, from mango and mint to cotton candy and gummy bear – that hook them onto a highly addictive product.

The time for waiting is over. The FDA must immediately remove all flavored e-cigarettes from the market nationwide, prohibit all marketing to children and prohibit online sales of e-cigarettes. The

agency also must enforce the law by prohibiting the introduction of new e-cigarette products without prior agency review and authorization and promptly reviewing products already on the market.

Until the FDA takes these necessary steps, states and cities should continue their growing efforts to protect kids by prohibiting the sale of all flavored e-cigarettes.

###