



Public policy in the best interest of children

Date: September 12, 2019
To: Michigan House Oversight Committee
From: Matt Gillard, President & CEO
matt@michiganschildren.org or (517) 485-3500
RE: The Youth Vaping Public Health Crisis

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this hearing regarding our critical youth vaping public health crisis. Michigan's Children is an independent nonprofit dedicated to advocating for public policies in the best interests of children and families, from cradle to career, especially those who face significant challenges. We determine our priorities based on the lived experiences of children, youth, families, and those who serve them, as well as research, data, and policy analysis. During our 2018 youth-led candidate forums, our candidates fielded questions from middle- and high-school aged youth about vaping and what they would do to address rising youth usage.

Michigan's Children has applauded Gov. Whitmer's bold action of using her statutory power to declare a public health emergency, banning the sale of flavored e-cigarettes that have become the source of a vexing health problem for youth in Michigan and nationally. Our policy recommendations have long been rooted in the knowledge that children and youth learn best when their brains and bodies are healthy. With the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as the Food and Drug Administration recognizing vaping as the most commonly used tobacco product among American youth, the Governor's action has merit for cutting off supplies of products clearly designed to attract a younger market, and one for whom addiction to nicotine can become a life-long struggle. The reality is, while adults have reached for e-cigarettes as a means to quit smoking, vaping products wrapped in the lure of bubble-gum and candy flavors have exposed our youth to addictive nicotine. From 2017-2018, e-cigarette use among high school students has increased 78 percent.

Our organization has heard from youth themselves that youth vaping is a public health crisis, and we testify today to echo their concerns. We thank you for the opportunity to share our testimony with your committee, and urge you to continue to stand behind our Governor, and leading federal agencies and look forward to continuing to work with our elected officials to make public policy decisions in the best interests of children, youth, and families.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers

- Kurt Strehlke, Chair
Bank of America
Shaun Wilson, Vice Chair
Treasurer
Tony Stamas, Treasurer
Small Business Association of Michigan
Kristen McDonald, Immediate Past Chair
Greater Midland

Directors

- Yazeed Moore
WK Kellogg Foundation
Terry Murphy
Retired - Certified Public Accountant
Diana Wong
Eastern Michigan University
John Ziraldo
The Skillman Foundation

Matthew Gillard
President and CEO