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EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, CEO

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October 16, 2019

The Honorable Bill Lee
Governor's Office
State of Tennessee
State Capitol, 1st Floor
600 Martin L. King, Jr., Blvd.
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Governor Lee:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and medical student members, I am writing to urge your administration to issue an emergency temporary measure to prohibit the sale of flavored e-cigarette products in Tennessee and to call on the Tennessee General Assembly to permanently prohibit the sale of flavored e-cigarettes when the legislature reconvenes in 2020.

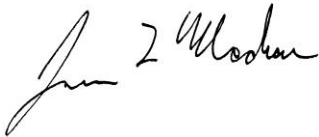
The e-cigarette-related lung illnesses currently sweeping across the country reaffirm our belief that the use of e-cigarettes and vaping is an urgent public health epidemic that must be addressed. A particular danger of e-cigarettes is the appeal of flavorings. Candy and fruit flavored e-cigarette products play a significant role in drawing young people to vaping. Flavored products are often perceived to be “safer” and are especially attractive to young users who enjoy sweet or minty flavors. Deliberate marketing of these qualities to young people has been disturbingly successful, and the numbers of America’s youth using e-cigarette products is soaring. In addition to the harm that can be caused by e-cigarette use directly—which has been tragically demonstrated in recent weeks by over a thousand people falling ill with serious or fatal lung illnesses linked to vaping—e-cigarettes have the potential to undermine the public health gains that have been made over the years in combatting the smoking epidemic. Evidence has demonstrated that youths who use e-cigarettes are at greater risk of subsequently initiating tobacco use.

Given the dramatic rise in e-cigarette use among young people in the last year alone, it is clear that we must all do everything we can to help reverse this epidemic. The way to prevent another generation from developing nicotine dependence is to limit access to flavored products that are designed and marketed to appeal to young people and continue to raise awareness that e-cigarettes are harmful, powerfully addictive, and can often lead young people to smoke conventional cigarettes. With serious vaping-related illnesses and deaths being reported, more stringent policies are necessary.

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We urge you to take swift action to protect Tennessee's youth from flavored e-cigarette products and stand ready to assist you with these efforts. We appreciate your consideration of our views on this important public health issue. If you need further information, please contact Annalia Michelman, JD, Senior Legislative Attorney, AMA Advocacy Resource Center, at annalia.michelman@ama-assn.org, or (312) 464-4788.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "M".

James L. Madara, MD

cc: Tennessee Medical Association
Jesse M. Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH
Kevin W. Williams, MSA