Possible Cause of Vaping Illness Identified by CDC

U.S. health officials have named a probable culprit in the vaping-related lung injuries that have affected more than 2,000 people and resulted in at least 39 deaths. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced November 8, that researchers found vitamin E acetate in the lung fluids in 29 people spread across 10 states. No other toxins were detected.

Tests were conducted for plant oils, petroleum distillates and other potentially hazardous chemicals. In 23 cases, THC or its metabolites were present, and 16 had nicotine in their lungs.

Vitamin E acetate has also been identified as an ingredient used to cut oils in some THC vape cartridges produced in the underground market. While vitamin E acetate, an oil made from the vitamin, is considered safe to consume in food products, it is not considered safe to inhale.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) reports that 70% of the nearly 600 vaping products linked to the disease that they have tested contained THC. On October 1, Americans for Safe Access issued patient-focused recommendations on cannabis vaping products, noting that vitamin E acetate is implicated as a potential cause of illness and injury, but it has not been present in all samples, and an independent study of underground vape cartridges found other hazardous chemicals, too. The analysis of 10 types of underground market cannabis vape cartridges—performed by CannaSafe, a PFC-certified lab in California—found all contained myclobutanil, a pesticide that becomes poisonous hydrogen cyanide when heated. Heavy metals have also been identified in some cartridge designs.

Federal and state health officials are telling cannabis processors to not add vitamin E acetate to vaping products. The CDC and ASA both recommend ceasing use of cannabis-containing cartridges, particularly those obtained from the illicit market, until there is clarity as to what is causing these illnesses and deaths.

ASA recommends using only cannabis products that have undergone testing at an independent, third-party laboratory that has verified that the product is free of harmful additives.

PFC Events Include New Trainings

MJBizCon is hosting an event with ASA in Las Vegas on December 10 from noon to 4:30 p.m. during their Association’s Day. ASA will be holding an educational event, “Ensuring Product Safety, Compliance and Social Responsibility in the Cannabis Industry.” This event will be free to all MJBiz registrants. RSVP now to secure your spot for the day’s programming and receive a discount code for $100 off MJBizCon registration. Email Reenal@safeaccessnow.org for more information.

On November 8, ASA Interim Director Debbie Churgai joined PFC Director Heather Despres now at the conference. All donors have the option of receiving a special thank you in the conference program. The donor’s name or organizational name will be listed on our conference website as well as a thank you in the conference program.

ASA’s Patient’s Guide for Holiday Travel

Thanksgiving is a peak travel time in the U.S., with millions of Americans visiting loved ones. Patients traveling out of state may not know if their medicine will be available in the states they visit. ASA’s Medical Cannabis Patient’s Guide for U.S. Travel helps patients understand laws in states and territories in which they may be eligible to obtain cannabis legally. It also includes information on patient rights, tips for travel, storing cannabis, and using a retail dispensary.

The laws and regulations reported in this guide were last updated on September 1, 2019. Laws and regulations change constantly, so patients should review current information on medical cannabis laws and regulations in the jurisdiction(s) they will be visiting before traveling across state lines. Before traveling, it is important for patients to review the most up-to-date information for the jurisdiction(s) they will be visiting, as laws and regulations are subject to change.

ASA’s Medical Cannabis Patient’s Guide for U.S. Travel is a free online resource that can be shared with anyone who might find it helpful while traveling. www.safeaccessnow.org/travel.
Eryck Stamper had no question about his career path. Military service is the family business. His parents, uncles, grandfather and great grandfather had served in the armed forces. When he committed at age 18 to join the U.S. Navy, he did a shot with his recruiter and his mother at the bar where she worked. By the end of a distinguished 23-year career in the Navy, including multiple naval deployments in support of Desert Shield/Enduring Freedom, Somalia, and multiple relief efforts, he was coming to grips with having become “a hardcore alcoholic.”

He quit drinking the summer of 2013 and switched to cannabis as soon as he retired that October. Cannabis helped him not just stay away from alcohol but also eliminate all but one of the eight medications he had been prescribed to cope with the various physical and psychological injuries of his service.

When he enlisted straight out of high school in 1990, Eryck started at the bottom as an E-1 Seaman Recruit, swabbing decks and standing shipboard underway watches. Over his years of service, he came to embody what the Navy calls “deck-plate leadership”—working your way up but never forgetting where you came from. As he rose to the rank of E-8 Senior Chief Petty Officer, dealing with a blue line on base, forcing family and the support of his mother and grandmother, who were proud to see him in uniform and are proud of his work for others.

“Now I’ve got my sights set on veterans, family and first responders—the tax advantages of hiring them, the training and discipline they can bring to any organization.”

He’s also been advocating for medical cannabis and alternative holistic health approaches with the Veterans Administration (VA), the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion.

“We’ve got the support of the VFW and the Legion, and we’re working with the VA on suicide prevention and a CBD suppository for prostate health and endometriosis,” Eryck says. “But we’re still dealing with a blue line on base, forcing family members to go off base for medical cannabis.”

Eryck has just graduated from organic farm school from Therapeutic Alternatives of Maryland (TALMAR) under a Veterans Administration vocation and rehabilitation program and is focused on developing the Maryland Hemp Exchange.

“Yes! Please accept my donation

Mail to: Americans for Safe Access, 1624 U Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20009

www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org

ACTION ALERT: Find a Sponsor for a Unity Scholarship

By helping to find a sponsor, who can provide a one-time donation of $1,500, you can guarantee a scholarship to our 2020 National Medical Cannabis Unity conference. Any person or organization that donates can either choose to designate a scholarship to a specific recipient or contribute to our fund to award our most deserving applicants. To guarantee a scholarship spot, and a chance to change the minds of lawmakers in your state, find a donor today who will sponsor you! All donors have the option to remain anonymous. For more information visit, www.asaunity.org/send_a_patient_to.Unity

JOIN TODAY!

(choose one) ☐ Monthly ☐ One-time ☐ $100 ☐ $50 ☐ $35 ☐ Other Amount $____________

Name ________________________________

Address ________________________________

City, State, Zip ________________________________

Phone ________________________________

Email ________________________________

☐ Check or Money Order Enclosed.

Card Number: ________________________________

Exp. Date: ___________ CVV Security Code: ___________

Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ AmEx ☐ Discover

Mail to: Americans for Safe Access, 1624 U Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20009

www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org

VAPE ILLNESS, continued from page 2

“While we are relieved that the CDC is making progress in determining the cause of the vaping-related lung injuries, our main concern is ensuring patients still have access to safe medicine without interruption,” said Americans for Safe Access Interim Director Debbie Churgai. “This issue highlights the need for continued research, education, and regulations that promote patient and consumer safety so that we can safeguard against other harmful toxins.”