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JUNE 2009 TOBACCO INDUSTRY UPDATE

Electronic Cigarettes Pollute Headlines with False Advertising

Tobacco Companies introduce a new nicotine product and deceptively market electronic cigarettes as a safe alternative

What is an electronic cigarette?



An electronic cigarette is a smoking device which imitates cigarettes, cigars, and pipes by delivering nicotine without producing smoke or tar. Electronic cigarettes convert liquid nicotine into mist which is absorbed in the lungs, producing a sensation similar to that of inhaled tobacco. The FDA emphasizes the fact that electronic cigarettes are still under investigation, and the organization urges users to remain cautious of the miraculous health claims made by electronic cigarette manufactures and suppliers. Health officials insist that this device should not be used as a method for treating nicotine addiction.

What could this mean for smoke-free laws?

Theoretically, if the tobacco industry succeeds at convincing the media, the public, business owners and legislators that e-cigarettes are a safe alternative to regular cigarettes, this product could create implications for smoking in public. Act 815 removed smoking from most public places and workplaces, but this new product may set Louisiana back if it becomes acceptable in public places where smoking is already prohibited.

Local report

Staff members with the Communities of Color Networks, a partner of TFL has reported that e-cigarettes are being advertised at the Mall of Louisiana in Baton Rouge. Watch for advertisements in your area and notify a TFL Regional Coordinator.

Product Representation in the News:

“Jose Canseco endorses Smoking Everywhere (E-cig)” by Sonya Smith

This article was published online in the Examiner on May 21st, and the author defends the use electronic cigarette as a cessation tool. This publication includes a video link in which Jose Canseco promotes electronic cigarettes as a revolutionary means to enjoy the routine of smoking without the harmful side-effects of tobacco use. The company's most recent advertising launch is designed to depict electronic cigarettes as a safe

alternative to tobacco, and they misrepresents their product as a healthy substitute.
<http://www.examiner.com/x-6732-SF-Health-and-Beauty-Examiner~y2009m5d21-Jose-Canseco-endorses-Smoking-Everywhere-ecig>

“Cigarettes Without Smoke, or Regulation” by Kaite Zezima

A more recent article, printed in the New York Times on June 1st, seems to approach the health claims of electronic cigarette suppliers with a little more skepticism. Ultimately, the article makes clear that this product is unapproved by the government and unproven to be a ‘healthier’ option. <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/02/us/02cigarette.html?ref=us>

Campaign Strategy and Marketing Techniques:

Electronic cigarettes are being strategically marketed as cessation tools. The website for Premium Cigarettes lists their new products under the headline “Switch to Electronic Cigarette, Decrease Nicotine Craving,” and it’s found under the link “Ways to Quit Smoking.” SmokingEverywhere.com, another popular supplier, insists that their products have been confirmed to contain no cancer-causing agents, thereby suggesting that these products are safe. These companies mislead consumers by listing the ways electronic cigarette are healthy improvements, but only in comparison to regular tobacco products. SmokingEverywhere.com depicts electronic cigarettes as “empowering.” The advertisement reads: “You decide the strength of the cartridges you use. Or choose nicotine-free cartridges to simulate the action of smoking while working toward decreasing your daily nicotine intake.” Consumers who are not conscientious of these marketing strategies may misinterpret these facts and attempt to use electronic cigarettes as a means of cessation. Electronic cigarettes still contain nicotine, and they are still extremely addictive.

Another marketing strategy of SmokingEverywhere.com is targeting the female population. This website is overloaded with glamorous images of female smokers, but it disproportionately displays only one photograph of a man using the product. Furthermore, the company has developed cartridges available in shades of pink, and the company describes electronic cigarettes as a “fashionable accessory.” SmokingEverywhere.com declares that because of the variety of available colors: “you can coordinate [electronic cigarettes] with your personal style and preferences.” After visiting the website it becomes clear that this company has targeted a specific audience.