

My name is Kay Doerr. I serve as Chief of the Genesee County Board of Health. Our Board of Health takes its duty to protect, promote and improve public health very seriously, but we need help at the state level.

We applaud Governor Whitmer's action to protect Michigan kids by ending the sale of flavored e-cigarettes. Evidence that youth vaping constitutes a public health emergency is overwhelming and easily accessed. Michigan Case Law gives MDHHS the power to "promulgate rules to safeguard properly the public health."

The Administrative Procedures Act allows the Governor to issue emergency rules "without following notice and participation" if the preservation of the public health, safety, or welfare requires such rules. That criterion has been met and swift action is not only justified but also crucial in light of recent deaths associated with vaping.

I'd like to share a conversation I recently had with a father in Genesee County. His 16 year-old daughter received a phone call from her friend who is also 16. She called to say she was staying home from school because she was coughing up blood. She was frightened but didn't want to tell her parents for fear of getting into trouble. She uses vaping products daily. Fortunately, she's not among the vaping related casualties, but I shudder to think of the impact vaping may have on her developing brain.

It is no surprise that rates of use among teens have skyrocketed. A product that was originally introduced as an aide for smokers wishing to quit, has instead attracted young people who likely would have never smoked cigarettes. It's easy to see how flavors like Gummy Bears and Skittles might seem harmless. These deceptive marketing tactics are all too familiar. Fred Flintstone and Joe Camel lured new customers when I was young. Same Merry-Go-Round, difference horse. Profits can never come before the health and welfare of our people.

I urge this committee to support the Governor's authority based on the powers the legislature gave her. Michigan kids deserve protection from harm.