

Re: The Health Effects of Hookah

Representative Mast and Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing the American Lung Association in Kansas to speak on the dangerous health effects of hookah.

Hookah is troubling from a public health perspective since evidence shows that hookah smoking carries many of the same health risks and has been linked to many of the same diseases caused by cigarette smoking.² As the American Lung Association and its public health partners continue to move forward to protect workers and patrons from the harmful effects of secondhand smoke, it is vital that we address the health risks hookah use poses to youth and young adults.

Hookah tobacco often contains flavors, including candy and fruit flavors such as orange, white grape or chocolate mint, which help mask the harshness of smoking. Hookah smoking is most common in the United States among young adults ages 18 to 24; however, some studies suggest significant use among middle and high school students. Hookah smoking may serve as a bridge to other forms of tobacco use and is falsely perceived as less harmful than cigarette smoking.

The American Lung Association does not support the use of hookah because:

1. Hookah use carries many of the same health risks as cigarette smoking.

Hookah smoking appears to be associated with lung cancer, respiratory disease, and low birth weight in babies.¹¹ Changes measured in the amount of air moved in out of the lungs when smokers breathe suggest that cigarette smoking and hookah smoking have similar effects on a person's breathing.^{12, 13} The combination of charcoal and tobacco is unique to hookah smoking and the charcoal has its own set of health effects in addition to the health effects associated with tobacco use.^{14, 12} Additionally, the use of shared mouthpieces during smoking sessions can spread infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, herpes, influenza, and hepatitis.¹⁴

2. Hookah smokers may be exposed to more nicotine than cigarette smokers.

Many users think hookah smoking is less addictive and exposes them to less nicotine than cigarette smoking.^{2, 15} As research on the health effects of waterpipe smoking increases, studies suggest hookah smokers may inhale larger amounts of smoke than cigarette smokers during a single smoking session.^{7, 11} Hookah smoking sessions are generally longer (1/2 hour or more) which results in considerably greater nicotine exposure.^{16, 5} In one study that pooled results from other similar studies looking at

cotinine (a by-product of nicotine in urine and blood), researchers estimated daily waterpipe use to be equivalent to smoking 10 cigarettes a day.¹⁶ When smoking a hookah, very little nicotine is filtered out when the smoke passes through the water in the pipe, with less than a five percent decrease observed.¹⁶

3. Increased availability and flavored tobacco make hookah use attractive, especially to youth and young adults.

A recent review of the global waterpipe smoking trend suggests hookah use may “represent the second global tobacco epidemic since the cigarette.”⁷ Hookahs are often smoked in private homes. Becoming increasingly common is patrons renting hookahs and purchasing flavored tobacco in public places such as bars, cafes, and lounges.^{5, 2, 6} Two-thirds of states have hookah bars and cafes.¹² Many of these establishments are located near college campuses and students can purchase pipes and accessories online.^{5,2,6} Additionally, some hookah establishments can cater to youth under the age of 21 as long as alcohol is not served.

Hookah smoking is a growing public health threat that may lead to a resurgence in tobacco use among vulnerable populations. On behalf of the American Lung Association we recommend that laws or regulations prohibiting cigarette or other tobacco use in public places apply to hookah smoking.

If you have further questions please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

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Resources:

- 1 Quenqua, D. Putting a crimp in the hookah. *New York Times*. May 2011. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/31/health/31hookah.html?_r=2
- 2 Ward et al. Characteristics of US water pipe users: A preliminary report. *Nicotine and Tobacco Research*. 2007 December; 9(12):1339-1346.
- 3 American Lung Association. An emerging deadly trend: Waterpipe tobacco use. (PDF–222 KB) Washington: American Lung Association, 2007 [accessed 2011 Feb 15].
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- 5 Harvard Mental Health Letter. The hazards of hookah: Why water pipe smoking raises concerns about addiction and other health problems. *Harvard Health Publications*. 2008 March; 24(9).
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- 7 Maziak, W. The global epidemic of waterpipe smoking. *Addictive Behavior*. 2011; 36:1-5.
- 8 Dugas et al. Waterpipe smoking among North American youths. *Pediatrics*. 2010.125(6):1184-1189.
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- 10 Primack et al. Waterpipe and cigarette smoking among middle and high school students in Arizona. *Pediatrics*. 2009; 123(2):e282-e288.
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- 12 Chan et al. Up in Smoke: The fallacy of the harmless hookah. *Chest*. 2011; 139:737-738.
- 13 Hakim et al. The acute effects of water-pipe smoking on the cardiorespiratory system. *Chest*. 2011; 139(4):775-781.
- 14 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Fact sheet on hookah smoking. http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/tobacco_industry/hookahs/ Accessed August 20, 2011.
- 15 Primack et al. Prevalence of and associations with waterpipe tobacco smoking among US university students. *Ann Behav Med*. 2008; 36:81-86.
- 16 Neergard et al. Waterpipe exposure and nicotine exposure: A review of the current evidence. *Nicotine and Tobacco Research*. 2007; 9(10):987-994.
- 17 Smith, J et al. Increasing hookah use in California. *American Journal of Public Health*. 10.2105/AJPH.2011.300196. Accessed September 2, 2011.
- 18 Noonan, D. Exemptions for hookah bars in clean indoor air legislation: A public health concern. *Public Health Nursing*. 2010; Vol 27 (1):9-53.
- 19 Food and Drug Administration. Flavored tobacco product fact sheet. <http://www.fda.gov/downloads/TobaccoProducts/ProtectingKidsfromTobacco/FlavoredTobacco/UCM183214.pdf>. Accessed August 26, 2011.
- 20 Tobacco Control Network. State hookah regulations. October 12, 2010. <http://www.ttac.org/tcn/peers/other/08.12.10.html>.