

# MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: JUNE 19, 2017

Re: A.516-A (Rosenthal)/S.2543-A (Hannon)

An act to amend the public health law, in relation to including electronic cigarettes within provisions regulating smoking in certain public areas.

The New York Health Plan Association (HPA) supports A.516-A/S.2543-A, which seeks to strengthen New York's Clean Indoor Air Act to further protect the public by prohibiting the use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) in the same areas smoking is currently prohibited.

Although promoted by some as safer alternative to cigarettes and a potential bridge to quitting, recently the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) determined there's not enough data to decide whether e-cigarettes can help smokers quit. Moreover, these products have not been well-studied, and their health risks are unknown.

In recent years, there has been a major increase in the use of e-cigarettes – particularly among adolescents. Researchers have found that more young people used e-cigarettes than conventional cigarettes and data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show the use of e-cigarettes among middle and high-school aged American teenagers tripled from 2013 to 2014 and then doubled between 2014 and 2016. In 2014, the use rate was 10.5% and in 2016 the rate soared to 20.6%.

Managed care plans are founded on principles that emphasize primary and preventive care. As part of their comprehensive approach to health care, HPA member plans have long sought to educate their members and the general public on the dangers of smoking, in addition to helping members that do smoke quit. In concert with this philosophy, HPA has historically supported public policies that seek to reduce New Yorkers' exposure to the harmful effects of smoking and create a healthier environment for all. Given the lack of information about the potential health risks posed by e-cigarettes – to both users and those subjected to the secondhand exposure to nicotine and other potentially harmful chemicals found in these products – protecting New Yorkers against the possible dangers is the best course of action.

Many localities across the state – including New York City, Erie, Suffolk, and Tompkins Counties – have already adopted measures restricting the use of e-cigarettes anywhere smoking of tobacco products are prohibited. A statewide standard on e-cigarette use in public places will ensure all New Yorkers received equal protections.

For the reasons outlined above, HPA supports A.516-A/S.2543-A.