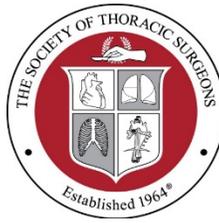


STS Headquarters

633 N Saint Clair St, Suite 2100
Chicago, IL 60611-3658
(312) 202-5800
sts@sts.org



Washington Office

20 F St NW, Suite 310 C
Washington, DC 20001-6702
(202) 787-1230
advocacy@sts.org

October 18, 2018

Dr. Scott Gottlieb
Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
10903 New Hampshire Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20993

Dear Commissioner Gottlieb,

On behalf of The Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS), I write to thank you for protecting American children from nicotine addiction through the Youth Tobacco Prevention Plan. STS supports your decision to take historic action against e-cigarette manufacturers and retailers for their roles in allowing youth access to these addictive products.

Founded in 1964, STS is a not-for-profit organization representing more than 7,500 surgeons, researchers, and allied health care professionals worldwide who are dedicated to ensuring the best possible outcomes for surgeries of the heart, lungs, and esophagus, as well as other surgical procedures within the chest. The mission of the Society is to enhance the ability of cardiothoracic surgeons to provide the highest quality patient care through education, research, and advocacy.

FDA has taken bold steps to protect children by sending warning letters to stores that are illegally selling e-cigarettes to minors, issuing fines to stores that continue to violate those restrictions, and requesting that manufacturers provide plans to mitigate youth sales. STS is pleased that FDA is also considering additional steps to address the epidemic of youth nicotine use, such as banning flavored e-cigarettes and moving up the enforcement deadlines for premarket review. As you know, Congress prohibited the use of flavors in cigarettes in 2009 on the basis that flavors made the products appealing to adolescents. As youth usage of cigarettes plunged,¹ sales of other flavored tobacco products grew. The 2016 Surgeon General Report on e-cigarettes concluded that flavors are among the most commonly cited reasons why youth and young adults use e-cigarettes.² Banning flavors in these products is therefore a clear way to address the epidemic of e-cigarette use by minors and young adults.

Thank you for working to protect the nation's youth from the harmful effects of nicotine addiction. If you have any questions or would like additional clarification, please contact Courtney Yohe Savage, Director of Government Relations, at cyohe@sts.org or 202-787-1222.

Sincerely,

Keith S. Naunheim
President

¹ 1 Courtemanche, CJ, et al., "Influence of the Flavored Cigarette Ban on Adolescent Tobacco Use," American Journal of Preventive Medicine, published online January 9, 2017.

² HHS, E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults. A Report of the Surgeon General, 2016.