



Vaping injuries and deaths on the rise — Augusta University experts talk health risks

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AUGUSTA, Ga. (Oct. 3, 2019) – As the nationwide death toll due to vaping-related lung disease [rose to 17 this week](#), this topic has been making headlines lately as concerned medical providers, parents and even politicians are now demanding action.

This week, [Augusta University Medical Center](#) reported its [first patient](#) with a vaping-related lung injury was admitted to the ICU. More than 500 cases of lung damage and seven deaths linked to vaping have been reported across the U.S. in the last few weeks, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“It took decades and decades of smoking for us to realize that we had a lot of older people carrying around oxygen tanks and that they were doing damage to their lungs over an extended period of time,” said [Dr. Phillip Coule](#), vice president and chief medical officer for [Augusta University Health System](#). “My concern is we have people thinking that this is safe and we’re not going to know that true effect of this, in terms of the damage occurring to people’s lungs, for years.”

Augusta University experts are available to discuss the wide range of questions related to vaping, including:

- Rise of vaping-related illnesses/deaths
- Known and unknown health risks
- Misnomer that vaping is safer
- High rate of teen/young adult usage

“The CDC made a landmark statement: That all of our efforts to get children and adolescents and young adults to move away from nicotine have been ‘erased’ – that’s a very powerful

word,” said [Dr. Martha Tingen](#), associate director of Cancer Prevention, Control and Population Health at the [Georgia Cancer Center](#).

The [health risks related to e-cigarette](#) use are impossible to ignore, she said.

“Some students are having a major experience immediately after they smoke, that they are having shallow breathing and they can’t get their breath. When they are admitted into the hospital and go to the emergency room, they are seeing that they actually have some lung damage and they are setting themselves up for future, more intensive lung disease problems,” Tingen said.

[Dr. Coule](#) serves as vice president and chief medical officer for AU Health System and associate dean for clinical affairs at the [Medical College of Georgia](#) at Augusta University.

[Dr. Tingen](#) is a behavioral nurse scientist targeting the prevention of tobacco use in children. She can speak with media regarding the problems e-cigarettes pose for our society.

Our experts are available to discuss the wide range of topics concerning e-cigarettes and vaping.

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