

Thursday in Austin, the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) Executive Council held a meeting to discuss the current vaping issues in Texas and the proposed definition for a condition recently added to the Texas Compassionate Use Program (TCUP), incurable neurodegenerative diseases. Informed Texas' Executive Director Jax Finkel attended the meeting and below are his notes:

Vaping:

HHSC Commissioner Dr John Hellerstedt gave an overview on the current status of the state's response to vaping illness, known as EVALI (for e-cigarette, or vaping, product use associated lung injury). On August 14, 2019, the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) was first notified. DSHS has worked in conjunction with the Center for Disease Control (CDC), US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and local health departments to track clinical data surrounding potential and confirmed EVALI cases. The first health alert was issued on August 16, 2019 and was updated on September 5, 2019. Vitamin E has been identified as a potential key trigger but there is more to learn. DSHS has created [documents and resources](#) for the public.

As of November 12, 2019, there is an estimated 239 cases and 1 death. Of the [179 confirmed cases](#),

- 22% are 18 and under
- 72% are male
- 9 out of 10 reported using black market THC vapes, possible in conjunction with other substances

Incurable Neurodegenerative Diseases:

[The proposed definition](#) for incurable neurodegenerative diseases was laid out for the council. There was no added comment from the commissioners or the public. Now that the definition has been officially proposed to the HHS Executive Council, they can vote to approve it at any future meeting. We hope that this process will move quickly so that patients with these conditions can join the program in a timely manner.