

**Aug-Sep 2019**

Volume X

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Edited by Stephan Kanga

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## Vermont News

### VPA Fall Social

October 2, 2019: Meet and greet with your peers! Pharmacists will be coming from around the state and students from the Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences in Colchester will be attending. To be held at Hogback Mountain Brewing (owned by two Vermont Pharmacists), in Bristol, beginning at 5:30pm.

### VPA Fall CE Meeting

Topics for October CE program : diabetes , smoking and vaping, migraines , USP 800 and new VBOP rules.

Our fall VPA meeting will be held on Sunday October 27, 2019 at the Capitol Plaza, Hotel & Conference Center in Montpelier, VT.

Register ahead on the [VPA web page](#)

### Vermont town loses its sole Pharmacy

The town of Chelsea is losing its sole pharmacy for the second time in three years, the latest Upper Valley pharmacy to close its doors as small, independent pharmacies find it increasingly harder to remain viable.

The Chelsea Medicine Shoppe, which opened as a medication dispensary in the

Chelsea Health Center in September 2018, will close Tuesday, Sept. 24, said Emily Otis, the pharmacy tech who has been managing the five-day-a-week dispensary since last October. She said prescriptions will automatically be transferred to Medicine Shoppe's Barre location unless customers indicate another pharmacy where they would prefer their prescriptions to be directed.

The Chelsea Medicine Shoppe was meant to fill the void created when Kinney Drugs closed its Chelsea pharmacy in 2016. But a combination of changing industry business practices and a smaller-than-hoped customer base made the 400-square foot dispensary unprofitable, said Jeff Nichol, marketing director and compliance officer at the 12-location Medicine Shoppe chain.

"We were doing 90 to 100 prescriptions a week when we really had to get up to 200 to 250 a week to break even. We saw the script count grow to about 100 and it hit a wall there," Nichol said on Wednesday. "We're pretty disappointed and had hoped to be there much longer obviously."

Nichol said another factor is the role that prescription benefit managers (PBM) play in the economics of the business. PBMs act as a middleman between drug manufacturers and insurance companies by negotiating with drug manufacturers on which drugs will be covered by insurance plans and how much the plan will pay pharmacies for them.

Rural independent pharmacies say they caught between third-party PBMs who have been pushing down reimbursement levels to unprofitable levels and insurance companies directing customers into mail-order prescription delivery plans, which they say are both having a deleterious effect on their business.

Read more about this [here](#)

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## National News

### **"Stop using e-cigarettes" CDC**

**"While this investigation is ongoing, people should not use e-cigarette products,"**

-Dana Meaney-Delman MD MPH – Incident manager, CDC.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has received over 215 formal reports of a possible pulmonary disease associated with the use of e-cigarette devices, liquids, refill pods and cartridges. This disease is characterized by

shortness of breath, fatigue, fever and nausea or vomiting. As many as 450 people are suspected to have been affected by this possible disease with 3 confirmed deaths. The CDC is working day and night to track, understand and respond to this pulmonary disease. So far, the cause of this disease is not clear. This is exacerbated by the fact that e-cigarettes have a broad range of chemicals, including nicotine, THC, opioids, poisons and toxins. Therefore, the CDC is sending a warning to the general public; - “While this investigation is ongoing, people should not use e-cigarette products,”

Dana Meaney-Delman MD MPH – Incident manager, CDC. For those members of the public who may feel compelled to use e-cigarette products, the CDC has developed guidance points (below).

The graphic is a dark blue rectangle with white and red text. At the top, the title 'E-CIGARETTE GUIDANCE' is written in large, bold, white capital letters. Below the title, the text 'FROM THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION' is written in smaller, red, all-caps font. The main body of the graphic contains three bullet points, each starting with a small red square. The text of the bullet points is white and describes guidelines for e-cigarette use.

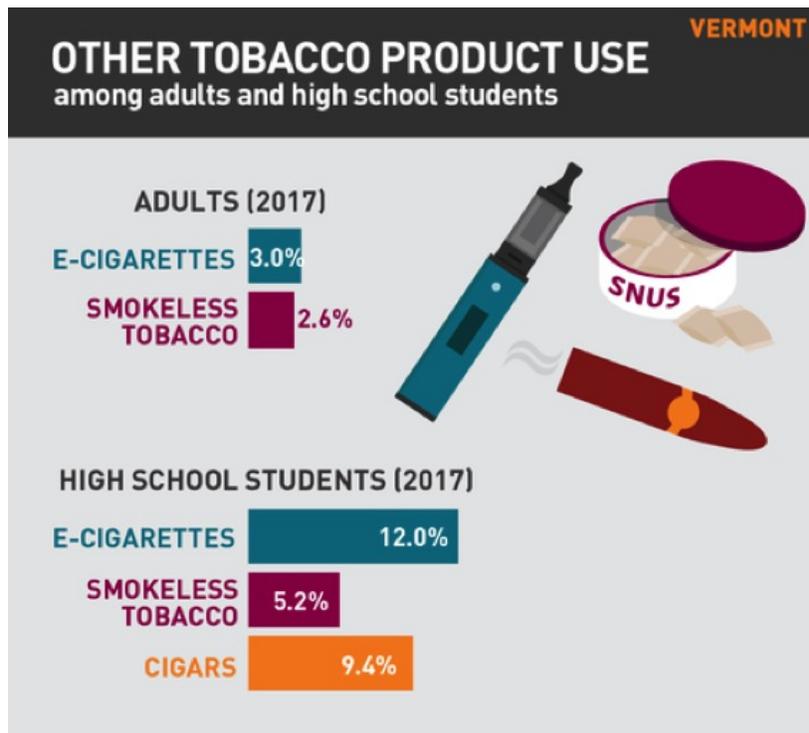
## E-CIGARETTE GUIDANCE

FROM THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

- Persons who use e-cigarette products should not buy these products off the street and should not modify e-cigarette products or add any substances that are not intended by the manufacturer.
- E-cigarette products should never be used by youths, young adults, pregnant women, or by adults who do not currently use tobacco products.
- Adult smokers who are attempting to quit should use evidence-based smoking cessation treatments, including counseling and FDA-approved medications; those who need help quitting tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, should contact their medical provider.

*adapted from cdc.com*

The FDA encourages people to submit reports of illnesses that may be related to this disease to FDA Safety Reporting Portal at [www.safetyreporting.hhs.gov](http://www.safetyreporting.hhs.gov). Recent statistics on tobacco product use in Vermont (below), show that high school students are the highest consumers of e-cigarettes. This population should therefore be placed on high alert and close observation for symptoms of the pulmonary disease.



*adapted from truth initiative - VT*

## Walgreens Closing 200 Stores

After announcing earlier this year the plan to close 200 stores in the UK, Walgreens has announced that they will also close 200 stores located in the United States.

This is in addition to the 200 stores they announced would be closed in 2015.

With over 10,000 sites in the US, representatives for Walgreens have stated that they expect “minimal disruption to customers and patients”. They also stated that they expect to retain the “majority” of employees, by moving them to nearby locations.

This move is expected to save Walgreens \$1.5 billion in annual expenses, hoping to offset an expected loss of \$1.9 to \$2.4 billion related to real estate and other company expenses.

In 2018, Walgreens bought over 1900 Rite Aid Stores. They have closed over 600 of these, with plans to shutter an additional 119.

[Read more about this story here!](#)

## Pharmacy Closures May Have Detrimental Effects on Patient Compliance

In a recent retrospective cohort study published in the JAMA Network Open in April found that pharmacy closures had a significant negative impact on compliance.

The study examined insurance claims from sample taken all over the country. It focused primarily on statins, beta-blockers and oral anticoagulants filled by patients 50 and older. They looked at data from almost sixty thousand pharmacies. They found that effect was seen within three months of a closure and was seen to persist for up to a year.

The study authors went on to state that pharmacy closures tend to disproportionately affect low-income urban and rural communities. The study also found that even loyal patients who had their prescriptions transferred to a nearby store experienced this decline in adherence.

Read more about this in Pharmacy Today:  
[Here](#)

And read the original study [here](#)

## Contact

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**Or... Follow us on [Instagram](#)**

**You can reach us here at: [vpanewseditor@gmail.com](mailto:vpanewseditor@gmail.com)**

## Stories Shared on the VPA Facebook

These stories were shared on the VPA Facebook page in March and April. Give our [Facebook page](#) a like to stay up to date!

[Community pharmacies struggle to stay open](#)

[The biggest obstacle to importing drugs from Canada? It could be Canada.](#)

[Scott asks feds for meeting on Canadian drug imports](#)

## New England Pharmacists Convention

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