



## Buncombe County Health and Human Services

Public Assistance & Work Support Strategies ~ Public Health ~ Social Work Services ~ Veterans Services

Stoney Blevins

Health and Human Services Director

November 22, 2019

Buncombe County Board of Commissioners, Brownie Newman, Chairman  
Avril Pinder, Buncombe County Manager  
200 College Street  
Asheville, NC 28801

Dear Mr. Newman and Mrs. Pinder,

As you are likely well aware, health dangers associated with vaping, or the use of e-cigarettes, are gaining attention both nationally and in Buncombe County. As of November 20, 2019, 2,290 cases of lung injury associated with the use of e-cigarette or vaping products have been reported to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) spanning 49 states and 2 U.S. territories. As of November 20, 2019 47 deaths have been confirmed across 25 states. At least 2 Buncombe County residents have been treated at Mission Hospital for serious health complications associated with vaping. NC poison control handled over 200 exposures to e-cigarette products in 2017 and 2018, and about 60% of these cases involved children under the age of 6. According to the CDC, e-cigarettes are not safe for youth, young adults, pregnant women, or adults who do not currently use tobacco products.

In light of these health concerns, the Buncombe County Health and Human Services Board voted on November 22, 2019 by a vote of 16 to 0 to respectfully recommend that the County Commission amend section 50.1 of the county ordinance "Smoking Prohibited in County Buildings on County Grounds or in County Vehicles" as well as section 13, "Tobacco Use Policy," of the county's personnel ordinance, to include the prohibition of vaping or e-cigarette use in all applicable sections of the two ordinances.

Should the Commission agree to this recommendation, staff from HHS are ready and available to assist as needed in any rewrite effort of the documents.

P.O. Box 7408, Asheville, NC 28802  
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[buncombecounty.org](http://buncombecounty.org)

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Under the Food Stamp Act and USDA policy, discrimination is prohibited also on the basis of religion or political beliefs.

Additionally, The HHS Board would request that the County Commission authorize a study committee to consider a revision of section 50.1 to include possible changes such as:

- Broaden the scope of the ordinance to include all forms of tobacco
- Expand the scope of the ordinance to include all county properties including parks and greenways
- Enact changes to public signage
- Clarify implementation and enforcement activities

If such a study committee were formed, HHS staff would be willing to coordinate this effort on behalf of the county and citizens.

Thank you for your consideration in these important matters related to the public's health and overall well-being.

Sincerely,



Buncombe County Health and Human Services Board

By: Frank Castelblanco, Chairman

cc: HHS Board members

HHS Director

Public Health Division Director