**NEWS RELEASE**

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**SEARHC welcomes the U.S. Surgeon General’s report on E-cigarettes and Youth**

**JUNEAU, December 8, 2016** - The SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) welcomes the U.S. Surgeon General’s (SG’s) report *Know the Risks: E-cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults.* This report highlights how e-cigarettes have the potential to cause lasting harm to the health of young users, especially their brain development, which continues until age 25.

This is the first report, written and reviewed by more than 150 experts, to be issued by the Federal Government that comprehensively reviews the public health issue of e-cigarettes and the impact of these products on young people. The report focuses on the history, epidemiology, and health effects of e-cigarette use among youth and young adults; the companies involved with marketing and promoting these products; and existing and proposed public health policies regarding the use of these products by youth and young adults.

The 2015 Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) asked students if they used e-cigarettes. “Of the 1,500 Alaska high school students who took the anonymous, biennial survey, nearly one in five (18%), reported they had used e-cigarettes in the past month, surpassing conventional cigarette use, reported at 11%. ” Martha Pearson, SEARHC Health Promotion Director noted “e-cigarette liquid, usually with child-friendly flavoring, usually has nicotine, but e-cigarette products can also be used as a delivery system for marijuana and other illicit drugs.”

The SG’s report ends with a *Call to Action*, asking parents, teachers, health care providers, and other influencers to help make it clear that e-cigarettes contain harmful substances and are not okay for kids to use” Dr. Murthy said. A Tip Sheet for Parents about how to talk about e-cigarettes with their kids can be found at E-cigarettes.SurgeonGeneral.gov Suggestions include knowing the facts, taking time to listen to your kids, and setting a positive example by being tobacco-free.

“If we know that kids think e-cigarettes are not smoking and e-cigarettes are OK and they’re a better alternative to smoking, we need to let them know that they are just as harmful, and perhaps more harmful, than smoking cigarettes and chewing tobacco” echoed Valerie Davidson, Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services.

As Dr. Murthy put it, “Your kids are not an experiment. Protect them from e-cigarettes.”

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