

Rise of vaping poses controversial questions

Luis Borrero

Staff Reporter

The use of electronic cigarettes, commonly known as vaping, has become increasingly popular among teenagers, whether for recreation, a coping strategy or a serious addiction.

According to the CDC, nine million American adults used electronic cigarettes and vapor products in 2014.

In the same year, the use of electronic cigarettes was at 13.4 percent among teenagers.

Although for some, vaping can be a way to tap into that rebellious teenager side, there are harmful side effects that may take a negative toll on long term health.

Dr. Lawrence Hennessey, M.D., specialist in allergy and immunology for the Okemos Allergy center, believes vaping with nicotine definitely harms your overall well being.

“Nicotine is poisonous in high doses and is not good to use,” Hennessey said. “Also, you still have the potential of second hand effect from people breathing in the nicotine. There are concerns, and my opinion is that it probably should be regulated the same way that tobacco for smoking is.”

Although the use of electronic cigarettes can have negative effects, it still can be largely necessary in managing addiction to legitimate cigarettes.

“There’s three bad things in ciga-

rettes: nicotine, tar with other combustion products and carbon monoxide,” Hennessey said. “It is less harmful than smoking, but it [can] be addictive.”

Hennessey also touched on how vaping has become a common social norm among teenagers due to the belief that it is safer than typical tobacco cigarettes.

“I think perhaps people may feel that it’s safer than smoking cigarettes, or that it’s somehow not addictive,” Hennessey said. “Nicotine is the addicting chemical, so it’s just as likely to be addicting.”

Christine Sermak elaborated on the rules and restrictions of vapor devices within the school.

“They’re specifically addressed in our code of conduct,” Sermak said. “It would be under paraphernalia and also under our tobacco codes. Three years ago we added [vapor devices] because they have become more prevalent within the school setting versus bringing out a pack of cigarettes.”

According to Code 30 in the Okemos Student-Parent Handbook, the use of electronic cigarettes and vapor devices are prohibited and could lead to a short-term suspension of 1-10 days.

Sermak said she personally feels the rise in use of vapor devices is concerning due to the negative health effects

and legal consequences.

“I’m very opposed to anything that is illegal, but also the health component is very concerning,” Sermak said. “You are all sophisticated enough to make your own informed decisions.”

Hennessey accepts the indication that it is possible for vaping to point the user into a different direction of substances.

“I think that certainly there are a lot of other things that you could smoke besides nicotine, and there’s potential that it could be a gateway in that regard,” Hennessey said.

Sermak also supports the idea that vaping can lead to other forms of substance inhaling, pointing to the influence of habit.

“Any time you are putting substances in your body, you’re becoming more susceptible either to forming habits, or the idea of looking for the next step to the next high, so I think you’re putting yourself at risk,” Sermak said.

An unnamed student, who, for the sake of anonymity, we are referring to as “Sam,” believes the use of vapor products is beneficial due to their ability to be substituted for

cigarettes.

“Whenever I feel stressed enough to smoke, I replace it with [vaping],” Sam said. “It’s very easy to get and very popular right now. It tastes better and there’s more variation in flavor.”

Although Sam is a part of the vaping wave, he/she too believes it is possible to fall into addiction.

“I feel like if people rely on it, even without nicotine, it can really be a habit for some people,” Sam said. “I know a lot of people who don’t use them with nicotine [and just] play with them. I feel like anything that’s like smoking can get really addictive easily without even noticing.”

Hennessey believes vaping without nicotine-enhanced juices and products can still cause a physical dependency rather than an actual addiction to the chemical.

“Some people can develop a psychological dependence, or a habit that is not necessarily dependent on the chemical,” Hennessey said.

If you happen to fall into addiction, Sermak encourages communication with a counselor, as she feels it is important to get help.

“Our counseling staff is amazing whenever we have students who have fallen into addiction. We can provide resources, we can provide support, we can be non judgemental, and I think those are keys to at least getting someone in a treatment program,” Sermak said.

“Nine million American adults used electronic cigarettes and vapor products in 2014.”



Indoor activities provide alternative to slushy season

Natalya Swartz

Staff Reporter

Autumn tends to happen between the festivities of the holiday season and summer. Everything seems to be slushy and grey, and being outside is not very appealing. There is Valentine’s Day and St. Patrick’s Day and Martin Luther King Day, but what are you supposed to do in between? Even the gray days of winter can have a highlight.

If you are still in the mood for a more festive atmosphere, visit the Zehnders Snowfest in Frankenmuth on Jan. 27.

It’s worth the drive—there are massive ice and snow sculptures and carving competitions, a petting zoo and Bavarian charm. Sculptors come from all over the world to compete. Various festivities run throughout the day and a warming tent is available to warm chilly visitors.

For the caffeine addict, a coffee tour in the Lansing area can be a fun way to spend a Saturday with friends. Visit a few local independent coffee shops, order a coffee at each and find a new favorite brew! Coffee

shops in the area include Strange Matter in Lansing, Chapelure in East Lansing, Bloom Coffee Roasters in Old Town Lansing and The Coffee Barrel in Holt. Each place boasts its own individual charm and array of drinks.

District 5 Extreme Air Sports in Lansing offers a great way to have fun and exercise. There is a Ninja Obstacle Course, Extreme Dodgeball, big trampolines, a Slack Line and many other attractions.

Braden Cooley (11) visited District 5 with his family.

“It’s a lot of fun and I think everyone should have a chance to go there at some point. It’s fun for not only kids, but adults too. Adults can jump around

and stuff, it’s fun for the whole family. At any age it’s just a lot of fun.” Cooley said.

They also offer theme nights, club nights and fitness classes.

The Broad Art Museum in East Lansing also provides a reprieve from the winter chill. The current exhibition is Fire Within: A New Generation of Chinese Female Artists. According to the Broad website, the exhibition features, “[T]he artists in this exhibition investigate a wide-range of themes and issues, including the status of women in China; cultural and gender identity; interpersonal relationships; and more broad sociopolitical dynamics, both in

China and beyond.”

The museum is located off of Grand River and features a vast array of art from prehistoric to modern times. Admission is free, so it’s a perfect option for a low cost afternoon!

A great way to warm up during the cold and clammy winter is hot yoga. There are a number of studios in the area including Yoga State in Okemos and East Lansing, East Lansing Hot Yoga in Trowbridge, Haslett Hot Yoga in Haslett and Bikram Yoga Capital Area in East Lansing. You can check out their websites for classes, pricing and deals.

So go out and seize the day with these fun activities!

French law promotes ‘right to disconnect’ from work

Gabe Hales

Staff Reporter

Long vacations and short work weeks have always been a staple of the french lifestyle, but now technology is making it even harder for these workers to relax once they get home.

Smartphones and laptops have blurred the line between professional and personal spheres, raising health concerns that have prompted the government to take action.

Under a law that went into effect on January first, employees at some French companies now have the “right

to disconnect” from their jobs once they leave the office. The measure aims to mitigate burnout and stress by redrawing a clearer line between work and home.

Some businesses have already put new policies in place; others anticipate future negotiations with employees. But the law does not ban out-of-hours emails altogether, and its vague language has left some wondering whether it will do much to change an increasingly plugged-in culture.

“If something like this were to be implemented here I feel like many people wouldn’t be capable of giving up those extra hours as many families use them to make enough

money to live. Think about people with families who work multiple jobs in order to support themselves and their kids.” Zach Camilleri (12) said.

It started in 2000 when a law to reduce the statutory working week in France from 39 hours to 35 hours was introduced. Although this was only for companies with more than 20 employees, in 2002, it was changed to include companies with 20 employees or fewer.

On the other hand, Americans work an average of 34.4 hours a week, longer than their counterparts in the world’s largest economies. Many work even longer. Adults

employed full time report working an average of 47 hours per week, which equates to nearly six days a week, according to Gallup. That’s about an hour and a half more than they reported a decade ago. Nearly four in 10 workers report logging 50+ hours on the job.

Studies by the Office of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) suggest that France is below the OECD average when it comes to hours worked and consequently French employees have above average leisure time on an average day.

In France, approximately 15 hours per day are dedicated to personal care and leisure (eating, sleeping, etc). With regard to a reduction in working time,

one of the recommendations from France’s National Economic Planning Agency, was that working time should be in line with other demands on time, generated by people’s social and private lives.

In this respect, the 35-hour working week appears to be having an impact. An evaluation by the government shows that the reduction in time has benefited employees in terms of both work and home lives.

Other companies in France and else-

where in Europe have taken more aggressive measures. In Germany, Volkswagen began blocking out-of-hours emails for some employees in 2012, while Daimler introduced a voluntary system that automatically deletes emails received over holidays. French IT company, Atos banned internal email outright in 2011.

Although this seems to be working fine in France, some say it could turn in the wrong direction for us in the U.S.

“I feel like America is so used to overworking themselves that if something like this were to be incorporated in the states, people wouldn’t know what to do with themselves.” Dean Buggia (Tech) said.

