

PHA Report on vaping related disorder among PHI members

PHA data confirms that vaping is a serious health threat, leading to significant respiratory issues for many Australians and causing severe complications for people with comorbidities. The assumption vaping addiction is benign is incorrect.

Data shows vaping is impacting people of all ages including toddlers who are being accidentally poisoned by vapes. Vaping is already having an impact on the private health sector. One in five vaping related hospitalisations falls into the PHI high claims category, exceeding \$10,000 in benefits paid.

PHA Statistics

- 178 privately insured members have been admitted to hospitals since 2020 with vaping related disorder*
- 59% were females and 41% males.
- There have been two reported member deaths in hospital with vaping related disorder condition.
- Average length of stay in hospital for members with vaping related disorder: 5.6 days.
- Average member age hospitalised with vaping related disorder: 56 years old.
- Lung and chest (18%) is the most common clinical category for vaping related disorder hospitalisations.

Vaping related disorder hospitalisations by patient age group:

- Children and young adolescents (under 15 years old): 4% of cases (occurring in members as young as 2 years old with accidental vaping exposure)
- Working-age population (15-64 years): 51% of cases (occurring in members as young as 15 years old)
- Older population (65 years and older): 45% of cases
- 11% of admissions with a vaping related disorder condition were for young members aged 15 to 24 years. 58 % were male.
- 63% of admissions for members 25 years and over were female.

Benefits paid for vaping related disorder hospitalisations.

- 1 in 5 vaping related disorder cases were high-cost claimants, where total overall fund benefit payments exceeded \$10,000.
- The median overall fund benefits paid for members hospitalised with vaping related disorder was \$1,960 per episode of hospital care.
- Australian health funds have paid over \$1.23 million in hospital benefits for members with vaping related disorders.

Comorbidities

- Around 1 in 10 vaping related disorder hospitalisations were for members with psychiatric, mental, addiction or behavioural disorder(s).
- Around 1 in 4 hospitalisations with a vaping related disorder subsequently discovered had respiratory condition(s) specified – e.g. pneumonia, acute upper respiratory infection, acute pharyngitis, asthma.
- Around 1 in 4 hospitalisations with a vaping related disorder subsequently discovered had a heart condition(s) - e.g. inflammatory heart disease, high blood pressure, inflammation of the heart muscle and atrial fibrillation.

State/Territory (Top 5) with the highest proportion of vaping related disorder hospitalisations funded by PHI:

- NSW (39.9%)
- QLD (28.1%)
- VIC (22.5%)
- WA (3.4%)
- SA (2.8%)

*Vaping related disorder is also known as E-cigarette, or Vaping Product, Use Associated Lung Injury (EVALI). EVALI is a serious medical condition in which a person's lungs become damaged from substances contained in e-cigarettes and vaping products.