

Inquiry into Therapeutic Goods and Other Legislation Amendment (Vaping Reforms) Bill 2024
[Provisions]

AMA Responses: Questions Taken on Notice

6th May 2024

(1) Question from Senator Cadell (reference Proof Hansard page 23): The last data I had was that 69,987 individual patients have sought prescriptions for vaping products via the system; is it possible that many of those would be under 18, or is that not allowed? (Proof Hansard: page 23)

AMA Response:

The AMA does not collect or store data related to medical consultations or prescriptions. This question should be directed the Department of Health and Aged Care.

(2) Question from Senator Canavan (reference Proof Hansard page 25): Okay. Dr Bonning, I have an AMA publication here on the history of the AMA. The second page of that document is a full-page ad from Johnson & Johnson, titled 'Caring for the world, one person at a time'. Did they pay for that advertising?

Dr Bonning: *I'll have to take that on notice. I don't know the publication you're referring to. I don't know its publication date. I will have to—*

Senator CANAVAN: *Yes, sure. It's called More than just a union: a history of the AMA. The subheading says 'Celebrating 50 years of the Australian Medical Association'.*

Dr Bonning: *Okay. Thank you very much for that. I will—*

Senator CANAVAN: *Take on notice whether you have any sponsorship from Johnson & Johnson.*

AMA Response:

The AMA is funded almost entirely through membership fees paid by doctors, with our policy and advocacy agenda motivated by the profession's focus on delivering better health outcomes for the community. The paid advertisement referred to was in a 2012 publication and the AMA is not sponsored by Johnson and Johnson.

(3) Question from Senator Canavan (reference: Proof Hansard page 25): There's one Johnson & Johnson product called Nicorette QuickMist Cool Berry spray. One of its ingredients is acesulfame potassium. A report on Medical News Today says:

Acesulfame potassium, or Ace K, is a common artificial sweetener. Some people suggest acesulfame potassium side effects include an increased risk of cancer and harm during pregnancy. However, research is limited.

The conclusion there about acesulfame potassium seems very similar to the conclusions we've heard today about vapes. There's limited evidence, we don't know, it may cause cancer and et cetera. Maybe you could take this on notice. Could you come back to us about acesulfame potassium and the AMA's view on Nicorette and their QuickMist spray vis a vis the risks of vaping.

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AMA Response:

The ingredients of Nicorette QuickMist Cool Berry spray are listed and approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), a world leading regulator of medicines and therapeutics that relies on a scientific approach and fully considers current evidence. Vapes contain known carcinogens and that is not something that can be disputed or questioned.

(4) Additional Question from Senator PRATT: Would you support a referral pathway to doctors and school nurses for children and young people who are vaping, or have a suggestion for an alternative mechanism?

The AMA maintained through its submissions and its opening statement (Reference: Proof Hansard pages 19-20), GPs are highly trained and experienced in managing addiction with their patients and are experts in smoking cessation. Guidelines from the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners are currently being updated to include new guidance on prescribing vapes (including for persons under 18) and supporting vaping cessation. With new clinical guidelines, GPs are ready to continue helping patients to quit.