



Sarah S. Anker, Suffolk County Legislator, Sixth District
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Legislator Anker’s Legislation Signed Into Law Warning Consumers of the Dangers of Liquid Nicotine



Suffolk County Legislator Sarah Anker, County Executive Steve Bellone, Commissioner James Tomarken, Board of Health member Patricia Bishop-Kelly and Dr. Rachel Boykan of Stony Brook University Hospital Department of Pediatrics speak in support of IR 2174-2014.

Hauppauge, NY- A local law to warn consumers of the dangers of liquid nicotine, legislation IR 2174-2014, sponsored by Suffolk County Legislator Sarah Anker, was signed into law today by County Executive Steve Bellone. The legislation, which could be the first required liquid nicotine warning in the nation, requires Suffolk County retailers to post a warning sign where liquid nicotine is sold.

Following the death of a one-year-old child in Fort Plain, New York, from ingesting liquid nicotine, Legislator Sarah Anker worked with the Suffolk County Health Department to draft the legislation requiring liquid nicotine warning signs to be posted in Suffolk County businesses.

“It's imperative we do everything in our power to prevent another tragic death from liquid nicotine,” said Legislator Sarah Anker. “This potent and possibly toxic product requires regulation, and without leadership from the Federal Food and Drug Administration, Suffolk County must move forward to protect our residents with the required warning sign.”

“I am proud to sign legislation today that was introduced by Legislator Sarah Anker and supported by Public Health advocates to take another step toward ensuring that the residents of Suffolk County are aware of the dangers liquid nicotine presents,” said County Executive Steve Bellone. “The bill that I am signing today will require stores that sell liquid nicotine products to prominently display a liquid nicotine warning sign to ensure that the public is aware of the dangers of liquid nicotine if not handled appropriately or stored in a safe place.”

Legislator Anker has worked extensively with the Suffolk County Department of Health Services, who will provide a liquid nicotine warning sign as a downloadable document for businesses in Suffolk County. The law will take effect 90 days following its filing in the Office of the Secretary of State. The sign will read:

Liquid Nicotine Warning:

Liquid nicotine may be poisonous if swallowed, inhaled or if it comes in contact with skin. It is not regulated so the amount of nicotine in any container is uncertain. **KEEP OUT OF CHILDREN’S REACH.** The use of liquid nicotine can be addictive. It may increase heart rate and blood pressure, cause dizziness and nausea, and aggravate respiratory conditions.

Women who are pregnant or breast-feeding, persons with, or at risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, or taking medicine for depression or asthma should not use this product. **INGESTION OF LIQUID NICOTINE MAY BE FATAL.**

“The access to liquid nicotine and its potential as a poison is an alarming new threat to public health, especially to children,” said Dr. Tomarken, Commissioner of the Suffolk County Department of Health Services. “Requiring signs that educate consumers about the dangers of liquid nicotine will help reduce the chance of poisonings in Suffolk County.”

E-cigarettes use disposable or refillable liquid nicotine cartridges. Exposure to nicotine can be highly addictive, toxic, and can cause nicotine poisoning. In extreme cases, exposure to liquid nicotine may be lethal. Liquid nicotine is especially dangerous, as nicotine is easily absorbed through the skin and some flavors may be enticing to small children. Even a small spill of liquid nicotine onto the skin of an adult, child or household pet can cause nicotine poisoning. Liquid nicotine may also contain cancer causing chemicals including formaldehyde.

“Liquid nicotine is a potent toxin that may cause significant symptoms in children, including nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, hypertension, tremors, ataxia, seizures, and even death,” said Dr. Rachel Boykan, Clinical Associate Professor from the Department of Pediatrics at Stony Brook University Hospital. “The recent death of a child in New York was one too many – we need to educate the public, and especially parents, of the potential dangers of liquid nicotine.”

Calls to poison control centers involving liquid nicotine poisoning have increased dramatically since 2010, with more than 50% of those calls involving children under the age of five. There were fewer than 100 cases of non-lethal liquid nicotine poisoning in 2012. In 2013 it rose to 1,300, and in 2014 the number has skyrocketed to 4,000 cases. In 2015, there were 420 just in the month of January.

“The need to educate and warn the public about the serious dangers posed by ingestion or skin contact of liquid nicotine is critical and most urgent,” said Pat Bishop-Kelly, a member of the Suffolk County Board of Health. “I applaud Legislator Anker’s insight and commitment to protecting public health and preventing serious injury or death.”

“We commend Legislator Sarah Anker, Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone, and the other leaders in the Suffolk County Legislature who have taken this bold but necessary step to protect the lives of children and prevent tragic and avoidable harm through public awareness and consumer protection,” said Executive Director of Grassroots Environmental Education Patti Wood.

Suffolk was one of the first jurisdictions in the nation to recognize the health risks posed by e-cigarettes and liquid nicotine and prohibited the sale of these products to minors in 2009, and strengthened the law in 2014 to prohibit the sale to anyone under the age of 21. New York State recently enacted laws requiring child childproof containers and banning the sale of all nicotine products to individuals under 21 years of age for New York City and 18 years and under in the rest of New York except for Suffolk County which prohibits the sale to those under 21 years of age.

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