



Sarah S. Anker, Suffolk County Legislator, Sixth District  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



MEDIA PRESS RELEASE:  
March 3, 2015

Contact: Amy Ellis  
Office: 631-854-1600  
Email: Amy.Ellis@suffolkcountyny.gov

## **Legislator Anker Protects our Communities from the Dangers of Liquid Nicotine**



**Riverhead, NY-** The Suffolk County Legislature approved IR 2174, a local law to warn consumers of the dangers of liquid nicotine products at the March 3rd General Legislature meeting. Legislator Sarah Anker (district 6), sponsored the legislation to require the posting of a warning sign where liquid nicotine is sold in Suffolk County, which could be the first required liquid nicotine warning in the nation.

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

“It’s imperative that we do everything in our power to prevent another tragic death of an innocent life,” said Legislator Anker. “Most people don’t realize how potent liquid nicotine is. It’s not properly regulated by our federal government, so the county must act to protect the consumer from this potentially toxic product.”

“Parents should be aware of the dangers of nicotine and nicotine products, which are packaged to be attractive to youngsters” said Dr. James Tomarken, Commissioner of Health Services in Suffolk County. “It is important to know that teens may be drawn to these products that are touted by advertisers as attractive alternatives to tobacco cigarettes. The products are not regulated and are currently under review for negative health outcomes.”

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.

“Suffolk County has laws in place that prohibit the sale of nicotine products to anyone who is under 21 years of age,” said County Executive Steve Bellone. “This legislation will provide additional protection to our youth and serve as a reminder to vendors to verify age before selling these product to minors.”

“Posting warning signs is the least we can do to protect our children and their families from this dangerous product,” said Suffolk County Legislature Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory. “People don’t realize how dangerous liquid nicotine is and this is one step we can take to better educate the public.”

E-cigarettes use disposable or refillable liquid nicotine cartridges. Products are available that allow e-cigarette users to refill their cartridges with liquid nicotine. 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 (which contains formaldehyde) onto the hands or other body part of an adult, child or household pet can cause nicotine poisoning.

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 1300, and in 2014 the number has skyrocketed to 4000 cases. In 2015, there were 420 just in the month of January.

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 safety caps on liquid nicotine bottles and currently the sale of all nicotine products to individuals under 21 years of age is prohibited in Suffolk County.

Legislator Anker has made advocating for increased awareness of the dangers associated with this product a top priority. “With our children’s lives at stake, we cannot afford to wait for federal regulation,” said Legislator Anker.