

Orange County Delays E-Cigarette Decision

By [Joey DeVito](#)

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Posted April 27, 2016 at 10:31 pm



E-Cigarette. Photo via [Vaping360.com](#)

The Orange County Board of Health will delay the vote on a resolution that would ban all use of electronic cigarettes in bars and restaurants across the county.

“Because the science is so incredibly important to this decision, I would recommend you wait and let some national vetting of this emerging science occur,” said county health director Colleen Bridger.

The Surgeon General is scheduled to release a report on the effects of e-cigarettes in the fall and the board will wait for the results of that report before making a decision.

They will also have an expert look at the report and share their thoughts.

“Little is known about the long term effects of vaping on the lung,” said director of the UNC Center for Tobacco Regulatory Science Rob Tarran. “However, e-cigarettes appear to cause changes in the lung in the gene and protein level consistent with immunosuppression.”

Tarran was in favor of the ban, but his voice was far from the only one heard, as people on both sides of the argument addressed the board.

Those opposed to the ban said the county should let individual businesses choose their own policies and that there was not enough evidence to prove that vapor from these products are harmful.

Vaping products are also commonly used to help tobacco users move away from normal cigarettes.

One resident said the ban would force people trying to quit smoking to be exposed to the cigarettes they are trying to get away from.

“By banning vaping products from area businesses, it forces me outside to be around the smokers, continue the health issues that I already have,” she said.

Those in favor of the ban said allowing it in restaurants and bars would renormalize smoking and influence children to try tobacco products.

East Chapel Hill High School student Sophie Jin said there has been a rise in young people using e-cigarettes and the ban would help solve the problem.

“This rule would restrict health risks in public areas and prevent our future generations to start experimenting with a dangerous product,” she said. “Although advertised as safe and reliable, more and more research has been published that documents harmful effects.”

No date has been set for the next time the board will look at this issue.

Orange County Commissioner Named Public Health Hero

By [Joey DeVito](#)

Posted April 28, 2016 at 6:12 pm



Bernadette Pelissier

Commissioner Bernadette Pelissier has been named Orange County's 2016 Public Health Hero.

Pelissier was given the inaugural award because she has served on a number of boards, as well as worked in the fields of mental health and substance abuse.

“Whether she is working on issues of environmental protection or homelessness, Bernadette always brings a health lens to the conversation,” said director of public health Colleen Bridger. “We have truly appreciated having such an amazing public health advocate serving as a county commissioner.”

The Public Health Hero Award is a recognition given by the Orange County Health Department during National Public Health Month to honor community members who champion public health causes in the county.

This is the first year of the award.

The Health Department plans to recognize a different individual annually.

The Herald-Sun

Orange County Board of Health tables vote on proposed e-cig ban

- [Keith Upchurch](#)
- Updated Apr 30, 2016



Vaporizers, sometimes called e-cigarettes, are being sold to underage consumers online despite laws against it. (Associated Press/Nam Y. Huh)

HILLSBOROUGH -- The Orange County Board of Health delayed a vote this week on a proposal to ban electronic cigarette smoking in enclosed areas of restaurants and bars.

The board heard from the community on the proposed rule and reviewed comments submitted from an online survey, voicemail, email and U.S. mail, according to Stacy Shelp, communications manager for the Orange County Health Department.

At the end of the meeting at Hillsborough's Whitted Building, the board decided to table the vote until after the U.S. surgeon general releases a report this summer or fall about the health impact of so-called e-cigs.

"Ultimately, the Board of Health will continue to read the existing research, weigh the public opinions shared, and then assess the most up-to-date data from the surgeon general's report to make their decision on this as a public health issue in Orange County," Shelp said.

According to a statement by the Board of Health, board members became concerned about e-cigs because of what it described as their "alarming popularity among youth."

"Although most adults who use e-cigarettes are looking for an alternative to conventional cigarettes or are trying to quit smoking, e-cigarettes are contributing to an overall increase in tobacco use among youth," according to the board.

Figures from 2015 show that about four of 10 local high school students have tried an e-cig, and two of 10 are current users.

The board said there's a misperception that the aerosol emitted by electronic cigarettes is just water vapor, but added that it often contains nicotine and can contain chemical flavorings and additional toxins known to irritate the lungs or cause disease.

Existing laws prohibit smoking tobacco in enclosed areas of restaurants and bars, but don't address use of e-cigs.

May 1, 2016 2:00 AM

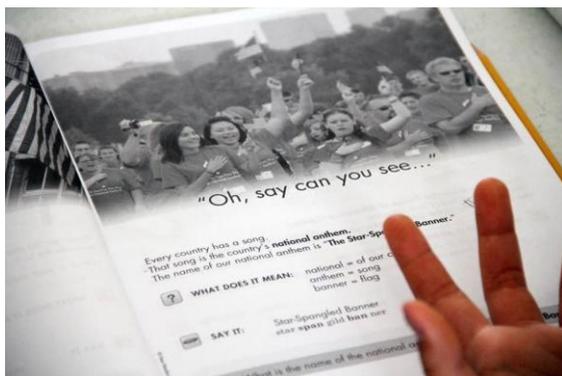
Refugees, immigrants study for citizenship tests



Mark Schultz mschultz@newsobserver.com



Mark Schultz mschultz@newsobserver.com



Mark Schultz mschultz@newsobserver.com

By Julia Sendor

Paw Pleh, at age 9, escaped her village in Burma just before soldiers burned it to the ground.

“I remember the Burmese soldiers killed my relatives and killed other people in my village,” Pleh said.

“We had to flee to the jungle, and sometimes we had to go back to the house to get some food.”

After over 14 years in Thai refugee camps, Pleh applied for refugee status in 2007, and was settled North Carolina with her five children and husband. She arrived with just one year of formal education, when she learned her alphabet.

Last month, however, Pleh’s most immediate challenge was remembering to stand up when her name was called for a citizenship interview.

On spring break from her UNC dining services job, Pleh sat in the Refugee Support Center waiting area, pretending it was a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office.

Flicka Bateman, director of the Refugee Support Center, played the interviewer:

“Why are you here today?” she asked. “How long have you been in the U.S.?” “When did you come?”

Pleh was one of 54 students from Orange, Durham and Alamance counties who studied for citizenship tests this spring, through the Orange County Literacy Council. The council and Church World Services funded the classes through a federal grant and hope to enroll 200 students under the two-year grant.

Orange County’s students hailed from Burma, China, Guatemala, Mexico and El Salvador – 16 of those students refugees from Burma and China.

All told in Orange County, 13.1 percent of the population is foreign-born, 31.2 percent of whom are naturalized citizens and able to vote – according to the U.S. Census Bureau and N.C. Justice Center. Since 2005, 936 refugees have resettled in Orange County, by Orange County Health Department records.

Green card required

Immigrants and refugees can earn citizenship status, in general, if they are permanent residents, 18 or older, and have lived in the U.S. for five years – or for three years if married to a U.S. citizen. The federal grant required all students to present their green card when they enrolled for the classes, to verify their legal status, said Elgiva Wood, Civics Education Program Coordinator with Orange Literacy.

“For citizenship class, students should be at or approaching five years of permanent residency in the US – meaning, they can prepare a little in advance of their five years of permanent residency,” Wood said.

But first the residents must pass a gauntlet of requirements.

For adults still grappling with English – some of whom are not fully literate in their first language – even ordinal numbers (“fifth,” “ninth”) and potential interview questions like “Are you a terrorist?” can trip up their quest for citizenship.

Applicants must pass an interview, English and civics tests covering U.S. history and government. They must correctly pledge an Oath of Allegiance. Students committed to attending two-hour classes two-three times per week, at sites in Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Hillsborough.

At the Hillsborough classes, teacher Lisa Bobst described how daunting the classes can seem.

“I think the most challenging thing is keeping (the students) motivated, because they are very nervous. It’s an intense process, and they don’t want to screw it up,” Bobst said.

‘To show my kids’

For Rogelio Najero Galeano, his four children and sense of community keep him motivated. Galeano, from Mexico, lives in Hillsborough and works at a swim and tennis club.

“We feel like we’re kind of visitors, now, and I want to feel like a part of this country,” he said.

“I wanted to show my kids they have to work hard. My daughter helps me. She’s proud of me, because I said I’m not good in school, but I’m trying.”

In class, Galeano and his fellow students took turns dictating sentences for others to write down. The mood was playful.

“Slow, please,” Galeano said, laughing.

This interactive learning style makes a difference, Jose de Jesus Martinez-Rodriguez said.

“Two or three years ago, I tried to read the book, and I said, ‘It’s very boring,’ but now that I’m taking the class, it’s very fun,” he said.

I wanted to show my kids they have to work hard.

Rogelio Najero Galeano, father of four

For Claudia Esparza, the citizenship classes represent one more step to making her own life decisions. Growing up in Mexico, she felt the pressured to stop her education early.

“I tell my mom, ‘I’d like to go to high school,’ and she said, ‘Oh, no, you’re going to get married.’”

Finally, three years ago, she earned her GED. Citizenship is next.

The class’s comfortable atmosphere, where personal stories like Esparza’s weave in and out, helped boost the students’ morale, Bobst said.

“We talk about the strengths and weaknesses of each student, and how they can help each other. Some are good at speaking, some good at writing, but ... they’re helping each other.”

“Like Rogelio just applied for naturalization. They’re cheering him on.”

The class was also making sure to include Esparza, when she left for two weeks in Mexico care for her father, who has cancer, after losing his wife to cancer. Claudia had planned to keep attending the citizenship class, via Facetime.

Checks and balances

In a recent class, the conversation revolved around elections.

“Who will be a citizen in September?” teacher Forrest Johnson asked. A few students raised their hands; others paused more tentatively.

“If you become a citizen in September, you can do what?”

“Register to vote,” the student chorused.

Students learned about a citizen’s duty to serve on a jury. Burmese students Bue Plo Wah and Mu Nwe jumped up to join hands in a ring with Johnson and pull back – demonstrating the three branches of government and its system of checks and balances.

Some are good at speaking, some good at writing, but ... they’re helping each other.

Teacher Lisa Bobst

Han Min Thein and Yuh Wah Thein, husband and wife, compared their new knowledge of the U.S. Constitution with their memories of Burma. Both survived student revolutions in Burma and fled to Thailand.

“What is really interesting is the Constitution of the U.S., because for me this is the first thing I learned,” Han Mon Thein said. “I am 48 years old. In our country, over 60 years the military government controlled our country. We don’t know about the Constitution.”

“And the Bill of Rights,” Yuh Wah Thein added.

“And then in the U.S., they protect everyone by the law. In our country, they don’t protect everyone by the law,” her husband said.

Yet even after students master their rights, history dates, and the branches of government – mundane-seeming details can derail them from passing the tests.

“What I find is that they can’t answer all the questions that some people ask ... such as, ‘Raise your right hand and put your left hand on the Bible,’” Bateman said.

But Paw Pleh could. She passed her interview, and her history and civics test in late April.

Last week she raised her right hand, put her left on the Bible, and was sworn in as a U.S. citizen.

Sender: julia.b.sendor@gmail.com

Read more here: <http://www.newsobserver.com/news/local/community/chapel-hill-news/article74467812.html#storylink=cpy>

CACUQ ELECTRONIC CIGARETTE

FOCUSES ON ELECTRONIC CIGARETTE WHOLESALE.

Orange County Health Officials Punt on E-cigarette Decision

3rd May 2016 cacuq Relative News 0

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The board heard, at times, emotional testimony from more than a dozen Orange County residents, along with a presentation on an online survey and a review of the science around e-cigarettes.

In the end, county Health Director Colleen Bridger chose to hold off on a decision, citing the incomplete science on e-cigarettes, until the U.S. Surgeon General publishes a long-awaited report sometime later this year.

"I'd really like our government to come out and say something before putting my board out on a limb," Bridger said.

Bridger also cited her concern that in the wake of the General Assembly's controversial decision to preempt a Charlotte city ordinance on the use of bathrooms by transgender people, lawmakers in Raleigh might also move to preempt her board if they moved to put e-cigarettes under the county's bar and restaurant tobacco ban.

"I don't think we do anything without worrying about the legislature coming in and preempting us," she said.

It's happened before

There's precedent for legislative preemption of county smoking bans: That's what happened in 1993, when Democrats still held sway in Raleigh.

Several municipalities in the state, Asheville among them, had moved to ban smoking from restaurants and bars. State legislators passed a law forbidding local governments from passing any smoking ordinances stricter than state law.

That ban was only overturned in 2009.

More recently, the state has been roiled in controversy over HB2, passed during a special session in March of this year. The law overturns a Charlotte city ordinance that would allow transgender people to use the

bathroom of their choice, and also preempts municipalities from passing anti-discrimination laws that are stronger than a state standard.

The specter of HB2 was raised last week by several opponents of the proposed e-cigarette ban.

“Local boards making ordinances that deal with private business ... is something I’ve heard a lot about recently,” said Jason Joyner, the lobbyist for the North Carolina Vaping Council. “I certainly would not like to see draconian-level policies come back from Raleigh because of a good faith effort made in Orange County.”

Harm reduction

Currently, state law classifies e-cigarettes as a tobacco product, which means the devices are forbidden in public schools, state and county buildings and vehicles and other state-run buildings, such as UNC athletic facilities, where tobacco products are banned.

While state law bans smoking in restaurants and bars, now it’s up to counties to decide whether or not to extend that ban to e-cigarettes.

More than 150 people had responded to a survey on whether or not to ban e-cigarettes in Orange County’s eating and drinking establishments. According to Bridger, more than 81 percent of those respondents supported the ban.

But Bridger said she’s sympathetic to people who have used e-cigarette to wean themselves from smoking tobacco, a strategy known as harm reduction.

Many vapers have not weaned themselves from nicotine, which has negative health effects, but the harm-reduction argument holds that at least they’re not breathing in cancer-causing products of combustion, such as tar and soot, and are thus reducing negative health effects.

Most of those who testified in opposition to the proposed ban were vapers who have quit smoking. Several of them choked back tears as they told of smoking-related health problems for themselves and family members that have diminished now that they’re vaping.

“The day my mom died, I swore to her I’d quit. And now, two years later, I can say I’m smoke free,” said Amy Stevens. “If you can’t smoke in restaurants and bars, it won’t devastate me, I’ll continue to vape.”

“But if there is a place I can go and they say, ‘Yes, we have these four tables over here where we’ll allow you to do it,’ that will be a place where I will go. That’s where I will take my husband on our date nights. It will allow us to go out and stay away from the smokers.”

Stevens’ husband, Ben, among others, testified that vaping had “saved my life.”

Emerging science

The science around vaping, however, is unclear. One thing that is clear is there has been a more than 880 percent increase in the number of North Carolina kids who have tried vaping since 2011.

But the U.S. has been slow to regulate the liquids used by vapers.

The contents of the liquids vary widely, complicating research. Rob Tarran, director of the Tobacco Center of Regulatory Science at UNC-Chapel Hill, told the board that his researchers have found e-cigarettes have “significantly different effects in the lung.”

“These changes appear consistent with immune compromise, so an increased chance of getting infections,” Tarran said.

Tarran also drew a comparison between the testing performed on medicines, such as asthma inhalers, and electronic cigarette, noting medications have to undergo “rigorous toxicology and clinical testing” before being released onto the market.

In contrast, the liquids used in e-cigarette devices have had none of this sort of scrutiny.

“Their effects for inhalation are largely unknown,” he said, both for people vaping and those around them.

It was this uncertainty that eventually won the evening.

“Because the science is new, because the science is emerging, because there’s lots of disagreement about the science, I would feel more comfortable if we looked at what the Surgeon General had to say about the science surrounding e-cigarette use,” Bridger told the board after all the presentations were done.

She reminded the board that the only thing they were allowed to consider in their decision-making process is the scientific evidence.

“Let some national vetting of this science occur before you take any action,” Bridger said.

Afterward, she reiterated her concerns about the state legislature overriding a board decision made on the basis of incomplete science.

“There is the risk of the General Assembly saying, ‘Well, they’re just being politicians and that’s not what they’re supposed to do, so we’re going to just abolish them,’” Bridger said.

“So that’s why we just want to be super, super safe on that.”

repost:<http://www.northcarolinahealthnews.org/2016/05/03/orange-county-health-officials-punt-on-e-cigarette-decision/>



Orange County Health Officials Punt on E-cigarette Decision

MAY 3, 2016 by EDITOR in FEATURED, PUBLIC HEALTH, STATE HEALTH POLICY, SUBSTANCE USE with 0 COMMENTS

By Rose Hoban

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In this commercial, actress Jenny McCarthy says, “I get to have a blu without the guilt, because there's only vapor, not tobacco smoke.” Many children's health advocates worry these images will serve to “normalize” use of e-cigarettes. Image via youtube screen shot

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Tagged [e-cigarette](#), [NC General Assembly](#), [Orange County](#), [tobacco](#), [US Surgeon General](#), [youth tobacco use](#)



Bat tests positive for first rabies case of the year in Orange Co.

CBS North Carolina Published: May 5, 2016, 11:55 am Updated: May 5, 2016, 11:57 am



Rapid bat. (AP File Photo)

HILLSBOROUGH, N.C. (WNCN) – A dead bat, discovered next to a cat Wednesday in Hillsborough, has tested positive for rabies.

It's the first case of rabies this year in Orange County, reports the North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health. Orange County recorded a total of 10 positive cases last year and 23 the year before.

The cat involved in this case was currently vaccinated against rabies and has received a booster shot pursuant to North Carolina's rabies laws. An unvaccinated animal must either be destroyed or quarantined for a period up to four months.

A Communicable Disease Nurse from the Orange County Health Department is evaluating whether humans are at risk of rabies exposure. Of concern is the possibility of secondary exposure from the owners having contact with the cat after the incident.

"Prevention is the best measure for effective rabies control for pets and people alike," said Bob Marotto, director of Animal Services. "Quarantines are done at the cost of the owner and can be expensive, so ensuring cats, dogs, and ferrets have had their rabies vaccinations and can receive a booster instead is always preferable for the pets and people involved."

Of the few cases of rabies in humans in the United States in recent years, most have been traced to bats.

A low-cost rabies vaccine clinic is scheduled for Thursday, May 12 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Eno river Farmer's Market, located at 144 E. Margaret Lane in Hillsborough. It is a law in North Carolina that dogs, cats and ferrets older than four months must have a current and valid rabies vaccination at all times.

The cost for rabies vaccinations is \$10. For more information, please call Orange County Animal Services at (919) 942-7387.