



Arkansas Department of Health

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Governor Asa Hutchinson
Nathaniel Smith, MD, MPH, Secretary of Health

From: Dr. Nate Smith, Secretary of Health

Date: April 6, 2020

Regarding: Guidance to Cigar, Hookah, and Vaping Lounges

The Secretary of Health, in consultation with the Governor, recently ordered that, “due to the close contact that occurs between customers and staff at a bar, club, or retail food establishment, dine-in opportunities are closed until further notice but are allowed to remain open for carry-out, drive through and delivery.” It has recently come to the attention of the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) that certain businesses that sell tobacco products continue to operate in a way analogous to “dine-in” restaurant services, where several individuals congregate to smoke or otherwise consume tobacco products. Since there are no reasonable assurances of recommended social distancing and safety in such cigar, hookah, and vaping lounges or cafes, it is recommended that the in-store use of their products cease. This does not prohibit the sale of their products to customers in a “take-out” manner.

This guidance to Cigar, Hookah, and Vaping Lounges is made in an attempt to reduce introduction of the virus into new communities and to slow the spread of infection in communities already affected by the virus. This guidance is subject to change as the COVID-19 pandemic progresses and could be strengthened to a directive if needed.