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## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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### **E-cigarettes now illegal for minors in Nebraska, hours of sale for alcohol could be increased**

**(Western Nebraska)** LB863 adds vapor products to the list of tobacco-based items that are illegal to sell to minors under 18 and offers a 2:00 a.m. closing for off sale premises for alcohol. The bill was signed by the Governor on Wednesday, April 9. The bill had an emergency clause, so it became law at 12:01 a.m. Thursday morning.

The Panhandle Prevention Coalition (PPC) is pleased that e-cigarettes are now included in the current state statute. The new law includes alternative nicotine products and vapor products in the current state statute restricting smoking and the use of tobacco by minors. Below are some provisions for the law regarding tobacco. The law:

- Creates “Alternative Nicotine Product” and “Vapor Product” categories
- Adds “Vapor Products” and “Alternative Nicotine Products” in the current state statute that prohibits the sale, giving, or furnishing of tobacco products, cigarettes, or cigarette papers to minors.
- Creates a “Tobacco Specialty Stores” category. These stores derive at least 75 percent of revenue from tobacco products, tobacco derived products, vapor products or alternative nicotine products and do not permit minors under the age of 18 to enter the premises unless accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.
- Restricts self-service tobacco, tobacco-derived, vapor products, or alternative tobacco product displays except in tobacco specialty stores or cigar bars. Penalties for two self-service displays in twelve months includes a six month license suspension.

The PPC recommends businesses reevaluate their tobacco\smoke-free policies to include e-cigarettes. “Businesses have the authority to prohibit the use of these products within their business. It is in the best

interest of a business to prohibit the use of e-cigarettes because their appearance is so similar to conventional cigarettes that there could be confusion by the public about whether or not the business is in compliance with the Nebraska Clean Indoor Air Act,” stated Tabi Prochazka, Tobacco Free in the Panhandle Coordinator with Panhandle Public Health District. Technical assistance and signage is available to any business wanting to strengthen their tobacco policy.

In addition to the restriction on e-cigarettes for youth, the law could negatively affect communities by allowing the extension of off premises alcohol sales. Off premises sales is the purchase of any alcohol you buy and take with you, such as liquor stores, convenience stores, grocery stores. This bill gives communities the option to increase the hours or to leave closing time at 1:00 a.m.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests reduced hours of sale as a way for communities to foster an environment that does not promote heavy, binge drinking behavior among adults and youth. This law allows for the increases of hours of sale, promoting heavy, binge drinking behavior among adults and youth. In Nebraska, we rank 9th in the nation for adult binge drinking and 7th in the nation for adolescent binge drinking.

In 2010 extended hours for on sale premises (bars, restaurants) passed and only two Panhandle communities adopted a city ordinance that would allow on sales premises to close at 2:00 a.m.

"Increased hours of sale will increase hours of consumption", stated Lanette Richards, Project Coordinator for Monument Prevention Coalition in Scottsbluff and is a member of the PPC. "We anticipate that the new law will follow suit minimizing the negative impact on adults and youth."

The PPC is a part of the Panhandle Partnership for Health and Human Services and is comprised of local community coalitions and a regional coalition united together by a passion and dedication to healthy and safe people across the lifespan. Our efforts include, but are not limited to, reducing underage drinking, binge drinking, drinking and driving, tobacco prevention and prescription drug abuse in the Nebraska Panhandle. The PPC and PPHD work together to improve the health, safety and quality of life for all who live, learn, work and play in the Panhandle. For additional information visit [www.panhandlepreventioncoalition.org](http://www.panhandlepreventioncoalition.org) or [www.pphd.org](http://www.pphd.org) or call PPHD at 308-487-3600 ext 107 or toll free at 866-701-7173.