

Patient Healed After Vaping Crisis

An expert specialty care team at Kaiser Permanente Roseville helped a patient recover from vaping disease.

Kaiser Permanente and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as well as federal, state and local health departments, are monitoring a multistate outbreak of lung disease associated with vaping.

According to the CDC, the exact cause is unknown, but all the cases appear to be connected to the use of electronic cigarettes or vaping products.

Currently, 7 deaths had been reported nationwide in connection with this lung disease, while many people have been hospitalized and needed critical care treatment.

The team at Kaiser Permanente Roseville Medical Center recently successfully treated a 21-year-old patient for this condition.

According to his doctors, Kaiser Permanente member Ricky D'Ambrosio of Placer County, California, came to the medical center in early September with a variety of gastrointestinal symptoms, specifically nausea and abdominal pain.

[Clarisse Glen, MD](#), a specialist in critical care and pulmonology, said the case was initially complicated to diagnose because pulmonary issues generally manifest as difficulty breathing, cough, or chest pain.

But when it was revealed that D'Ambrosio had used vaping products, Dr. Glen started developing a treatment plan.

“Although there are no standard-of-care guidelines specifically around vaping, there have been several published case reports regarding successful treatment of it with steroids,” said Dr. Glen. “Ricky’s ventilator was actively managed, and his level of blood oxygen was frequently monitored, as well as daily chest X-rays.”

Within a few days, D'Ambrosio had improved dramatically. He was able to transfer from the Intensive Care Unit and was soon released from the hospital.

Dr. Glen calls D'Ambrosio's improvement remarkable and said it highlights the integrated work of the multidisciplinary care team, including doctors, nurses, nursing aides, a respiratory therapist, a physical therapist, and an occupational therapist.

“They were incredible. The team wanted to ensure that he improved, but also wanted to learn,

because this was uncharted territory for everyone,” explained Dr. Glen.

D’Ambrosio, now out of the hospital and on the road to rest and recovery, agreed.

“I am feeling much better now. I am really thankful for the Kaiser team and everything they did to get me up and moving again,” he said.

Kaiser Permanente Northern California has long been a leader in smoking cessation, offering evidence-based interventions and strategies to help its members quit smoking, including vaping. Resources include smoking cessation programs, telephone wellness coaching, and one-on-one counseling with a clinical health educator.

Looking back on his journey, D’Ambrosio said his health seemed to change in a matter of weeks and even days. “I was 21 years old, I was healthy, I went running, I went to the gym almost every day. Just 3 weeks before this happened, I was wakeboarding, wake surfing, and hiking. I went from that to not being able to get around.”

Now, he says he will never vape again and that people he knows have quit after seeing what he went through. He has been sharing his story and championing a message of “Break the Vape” to raise awareness by asking people to share photos of themselves breaking their vaping devices.