

The Help a Smoker In Recovery Project (HASIR)

80% of people seeking help for drug & alcohol addiction are smokers. The addiction treatment profession has traditionally done little to address this issue, often even encouraging smokers to keep smoking so that efforts could be focused on recovery from the substances that brought the person into treatment. We all now know the dangers of smoking, and research is now indicating that people who can quit smoking in the early stages of recovery tend to have significantly higher sobriety rates in the long term.* It's time to focus on smoking for those who suffer from addiction, and thanks to new technology we can easily do so.

Electronic Cigarettes (“ecigs”) have emerged as an effective tool for smoking cessation, in that they offer smokers an alternative to smoking that is exponentially safer than tobacco cigarettes. They can provide nicotine at varying levels in a relatively safe way that millions of smokers have used to significantly cut back or totally give up tobacco cigarettes. Since they are fairly new there are no long-term studies that prove absolute safety, but there is more than enough science to show that ecigs are a powerful, effective tool in addiction treatment, and have been endorsed by the California Association for Alcohol and Drug Education (CAADE) as a tool for harm reduction.**

Most addiction treatment centers are ill-equipped and financially unable to provide formal smoking cessation classes, and although “vaping” is far less expensive than smoking the initial investment in ecigs is often an impediment for smokers to make the switch. Fortunately ex-smokers/vapers tend to be a rather generous group of people who want to share the same miracle of recovery with others. The Family Intervention Center & Services (FICS) is a non-profit organization that helps families who deal with addiction, trains addiction counselors, and provides smoking cessation services. It has started the HASIR project to connect vapers and vendors willing to share their expertise and products with addiction treatment centers that are willing to distribute these products to their clients who wish to quit smoking. The project is in its infancy, but already has collected about five thousand dollars worth of ecig products and e-liquid, and five treatment centers in Los Angeles and Orange Counties have begun to assist in the distribution. This is all due to the kindness of Mr. Tom Winn (an expert who makes “Mitvah” e-liquid) and Mr. John D. Hinterleitner, Owner of Vapor World in Chino Hills, California.

Logistics will be continue to be worked out, but the goal of the project is to:

1. Collect e-liquid and ecig equipment from donors (new & used) and provide them with receipts for tax deductions.
2. Distribute the above at no charge to participating treatment centers with the understanding that they will pass on the supplies to clients who:
 - A. cannot afford to start vaping on their own, but wish to stop smoking
 - B. agree to never sell the supplies
 - C. agree to accept the supplies “as is” and at their own risk
 - D. agree to help others learn to give up smoking
 - E. agree to write thank-you letters to the donors
3. Recruit and train volunteers to help in the project.
4. Train counselors and staff in the basics of smoking cessation and harm reduction. FICS will provide Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for certified addiction counselors, therapists, and nurses who participate.

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Although the focus will be on collecting and distributing supplies, monetary, tax-deductible donations to FICS will be accepted to offset expenses such as gas, stationary, etc.

This project is inspired in part by the wonderful Vape A Vet project in Phoenix, Arizona. We hope to learn from their experience and expertise.

The HASIR project will make its public debut at the Electronic Cigarette Convention in Anaheim, California. The ECC organizers have generously provided a structure for attendees and vendors to donate used batteries, extra e-liquid, etc. for the project.

For more information please contact:

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for donations: <http://addictioncounselors.org/> (Please reference the HASIR project)

*see <http://old.thenationalcouncil.org/galleries/business-practice%20files/%2311%20Baca-Yahne-Smoking%20Cessation%20during%20substance%20abuse%20treatment.pdf>

**** Position Statement:** The California Association for Alcohol & Drug Education (CAADE) supports efforts by the addiction treatment community to utilize its treatment expertise in developing tobacco cessation tools that include both abstinence-based and harm-reduction models including the use of electronic cigarettes.

CAADE accredits addiction studies programs in over 40 colleges and universities in California, Arizona and Nevada. It also issues the highest level of addiction counselor certification in California, and currently represents more than 6000 counselors, college faculty members and students.