FDA Authorizes First E-Cigarette Products; Ongoing Surveillance of Youth Initiation and Long-Term Health Impact Critical

The Food and Drug Administration announced this afternoon it has issued marketing orders for the first e-cigarette products authorized by the agency. While the agency limited that approval to tobacco-flavored products, denying additional applications for flavored products that continue to attract youth users as evidenced in a recent National Youth Tobacco Survey, that same survey found one in ten youth acknowledged use of an R.J Reynold's manufactured Vuse product, the same brand of product that received agency approval.

A statement from American Cancer Society and American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) CEO Karen E. Knudsen follows:

"While we acknowledge the rigorous scientific process undertaken by the Food and Drug Administration to evaluate these products against the public health standard, we remain concerned about the potential implication for youth initiation and lifelong tobacco addiction to high nicotine concentration products.

"The American Cancer Society strongly recommends against dual use where consumers still use some amount of combustible tobacco alongside e-cigarettes. Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable cancer death. Any amount of tobacco use is dangerous. To maximize public health, it is critical to prevent youth from starting any form of tobacco including e-cigarettes and to support all those who use tobacco products in quitting.

"While the FDA has issued strict marketing restrictions in an effort to prevent youth exposure, the manufacturer of these authorized products, R.J. Reynolds, has an established track record of circumventing regulation to addict generation after generation of new customers. Continued post-market surveillance will be imperative to ensure the company complies with the regulation and further monitoring of extended use of these nicotine-containing products will be crucial to understand potential long-term health implications.

"We call on the FDA to continue to prohibit all flavors in all tobacco products to prevent additional youth – and anyone else - from starting and encouraging those who use tobacco to quit for good."