



6<sup>th</sup> May 2024

To the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs,

**Re: Question on notice from Senator Louise Pratt**

Question: Would you support a referral pathway to doctors and school nurses for children and young people who are vaping, or have a suggestion for an alternative mechanism?

Response: I support the proposed referral pathway in the context of the legislation under consideration being passed. Should the legislation fail to pass, we are likely to see an increasing number of children and adolescents using e-cigarettes. Referring them all to school nurses and GPs is not feasible. The legislation under consideration will reduce the number of children and young people taking up vaping and encourage successful quitting attempts.

Should the proposed referral pathway be introduced, upskilling school nurses will be critical. GPs have received a considerable amount of guidance from the Royal College of General Practitioners. To my knowledge, school nurses have received considerably less support and training. Funding the development and implementation of training programs and resources for school nurses is critical to the success of any referral pathway that is introduced.

Kind regards,

Associate Professor Michelle Jongenelis  
Principal Research Fellow  
Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences  
The University of Melbourne