

Good afternoon

ASPA's response to the question from Senator Pratt is as follows:

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?

We can certainly recommend students visit doctors or other medical practitioners, including school nurses where available. This already occurs across a range of health and wellbeing matters affecting students. There is limited power to enforce such recommendations however, and any such referral would require parental agency to fulfil. There are limits to this idea as a useful intervention strategy as schools already experience difficulties engaging some parents to respond when raising concerns about their child's health, and if the behaviour persists it is not practical to make repeated referrals.

The mechanisms currently available to schools are education programs aligned to the Australian Health Curriculum, engagement with families, and through staff leveraging their relationships with students to guide and model healthier lifestyle choices.

We may see further benefits if medical services were more readily accessible on school sites, such as a visiting GP with appropriate expertise and the power to prescribe clinical intervention.

Best regards

Andy