

Tobacco Company Altria has \$12.8 Billion Stake in Juul—FDA Concerned

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As shared many times in the past, tobacco companies own a large percentage of e-cigarette companies. Recently “Big Tobacco” company Altria acquired a \$12.8 Billion stake in Juul, the cool-looking vaping device that now dominates the e-cigarette market.

The FDA voiced concerns that the investment contradicts commitments from both companies to address an epidemic of youth vaping. Juul has been under scrutiny, not only for its advertising and social media campaigns, but also because its liquids have historically had nicotine levels higher than other products.

Big Tobacco companies have in the past notoriously engaged in underhanded practices to increase addiction to its products. That practice didn’t change until legal action and public outcry forced government intervention. These days, tobacco companies, including Altria, make public statements that they want to move people off traditional cigarettes—over to e-cigarettes.

Altria also stated in a [response letter to the FDA](#) that the investments will help Juul with its youth prevention efforts, and that they will be limiting the expansion of sales into no more than 20,000 additional stores. That’s **20,000** additional outlets for high-nicotine-content Juul products.

It is not surprising that Altria would choose to invest in the highest-level nicotine product on the market with the highest market share, i.e., 70% of sales. That’s just good business. If the FDA wanted to avoid these kinds of massive investments between tobacco and rising e-cigarette companies, it should have implemented and enforced the Deeming Rule that would have required FDA approval for e-cigarette products before they are launched on the market.

Without taking that action, any complaints now are just a repeat of the obsequious mewlings the FDA has been using to communicate with the e-cigarette industry over the past 20 months.

While the FDA is often wise to take care not to chill a new industry, in this case, its lack of action is at the cost of millions of young people—the new, rapidly growing, generation of nicotine addicts. Addicts that are also at risk for catastrophic injury or death from unregulated products that explode during use. From a social perspective, the FDA is still doing too little, too late.

If you or someone you know has been injured or is suffering from health problems from use of e-cigarettes, you should find an experienced e-cigarette injury attorney to advise you on the ability to seek compensation for your injuries.

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