

The Role of the North Sumatra Provincial National Narcotics Agency in Preventing the Abuse of Narcotic-Laced Vape Liquid Among the Residents of Medan City

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis peran Badan Narkotika Nasional Provinsi Sumatera Utara (BNNP Sumut) dalam mencegah penyalahgunaan cairan vape bermuatan narkotika di Kota Medan. Fokus penelitian diselaraskan pada pelaksanaan peran dan kecukupan proses pencegahan, bukan pada klaim efektivitas hasil perilaku yang memerlukan pengukuran populasi. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan yuridis empiris dengan analisis peraturan perundang-undangan, wawancara semi-terstruktur terhadap dua informan yang dipilih secara purposif di BNNP Sumut pada Juli 2026, serta triangulasi dokumen resmi dan sumber institusional. Kecukupan implementasi dinilai melalui lima tolok ukur: kesesuaian dengan mandat hukum, ketepatan sasaran komunikasi risiko, bukti pelaksanaan program, kesiapan koordinasi dan identifikasi laboratorium, serta dokumentasi monitoring dan evaluasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa BNNP Sumut melaksanakan fungsi pencegahan melalui komunikasi, informasi, edukasi, pemberdayaan masyarakat, dan koordinasi lintas instansi. Namun, bukti yang tersedia belum memadai untuk menyimpulkan penurunan penyalahgunaan sebagai akibat langsung dari program tersebut. Hambatan utama meliputi perubahan modus melalui produk vape, kebutuhan uji laboratorium untuk mengidentifikasi kandungan zat, distribusi melalui kanal digital dan jejaring informal, serta keterbatasan dokumentasi capaian berbasis outcome. Penguatan pencegahan memerlukan koordinasi laboratorium dan deteksi dini, pemantauan pasar digital berbasis kewenangan, edukasi remaja yang spesifik terhadap risiko vape, serta evaluasi berbasis indikator yang dapat ditelusuri.

Kata Kunci: BNNP Sumatera Utara; Pencegahan; Cairan Vape; Narkotika; Kota Medan.

Abstract

This study analyzes the role of the North Sumatra Provincial National Narcotics Agency (BNNP Sumut) in preventing the abuse of narcotic-laced vape liquids in Medan City. The inquiry is deliberately framed around role implementation and process adequacy rather than behavioral outcome effectiveness, which would require population-level measurement. The study uses an empirical legal approach combining statutory analysis, semi-structured interviews with two purposively selected BNNP Sumut informants in July 2026, and documentary triangulation using official and institutional sources. Implementation adequacy is assessed through five benchmarks: consistency with the legal mandate, specificity of risk communication, documented program delivery, readiness for inter-agency and laboratory coordination, and

monitoring and evaluation records. The findings indicate that BNNP Sumut performs preventive functions through communication, information, education, community empowerment, and inter-agency coordination. The available evidence, however, is insufficient to attribute any reduction in drug abuse directly to those programs. Principal constraints include the adaptation of drug delivery through vape products, the need for laboratory testing to identify controlled substances, distribution through digital and informal channels, and limited outcome-based documentation. Stronger prevention therefore requires laboratory and early-detection coordination, legally grounded digital-market monitoring, youth-specific vape-risk education, and traceable evaluation indicators.

Keywords: North Sumatra Provincial National Narcotics Agency; Prevention; Vape Liquids; Narcotics; Medan City.

INTRODUCTION

Narcotics policy in Indonesia combines public-health protection, criminal control, rehabilitation, and prevention. Law Number 35 of 2009 defines narcotics by their pharmacological effects and by legal scheduling; it does not make every natural, synthetic, or semi-synthetic substance unlawful merely because of its origin or chemistry. The legal status of a substance therefore depends on whether it is included in the applicable narcotics schedule and on the purpose, authority, and manner of its possession or use. Medical and scientific uses authorized by law must be distinguished from unlawful possession, distribution, or abuse.¹

The same distinction is necessary when discussing vape products. An electronic cigarette is a delivery device, not a narcotic classification in itself. Cannabis-derived tetrahydrocannabinol and listed synthetic cannabinoids may fall within the narcotics regime when the relevant substance is scheduled, while other psychoactive substances must be assessed under the legal regime applicable at the material time.² Research on cannabis vaping shows that electronic devices can function as alternative drug-delivery systems, which creates detection and risk-communication challenges beyond conventional forms of consumption.³

Etomidate illustrates why temporal legal accuracy matters. Before the enactment of Minister of Health Regulation Number 15 of 2025, etomidate was not classified as a narcotic or psychotropic substance under the then-applicable schedules and its control depended primarily on health and pharmaceutical regulation.⁴ Minister of Health Regulation Number 15 of 2025, effective 28 November 2025, changed the narcotics classifications in response to new

¹Indonesia, Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics, arts. 1 and 6.

²Rantika Dinda Sastriyanti and Miftakhul Huda, "Ratio Legis Liquid Vape yang Mengandung Narkotika Dalam Pidana Narkotika," *Jurnal Ilmu Hukum, Humaniora dan Politik* 6, no. 4 (2026): 3126-3138, <https://doi.org/10.38035/jihhp.v6i4.8465>.

³Vincent Varlet et al., "Drug Vaping Applied to Cannabis: Is 'Cannavaping' a Therapeutic Alternative to Marijuana?," *Scientific Reports* 6 (2016): 25599, <https://doi.org/10.1038/srep25599>.

⁴Deva Alfianto Supardi and Yuliana Putri, "Etomidate dalam Rokok Elektronik: Pertanggungjawaban Pidana dan Perubahan Rezim Hukum Kesehatan di Indonesia," *Forschungsforum Law Journal* 3, no. 2 (2026): 151-164, <https://doi.org/10.35586/flj.v3i02.14097>.

psychoactive substances and placed etomidate within the current narcotics schedule.⁵ Accordingly, this article avoids retrospectively applying the current classification to conduct occurring before the regulation took effect.

Table 1. Selected National Narcotics Case Indicators

Period	Coverage	Number of Narcotics Cases
2024	Full year	46,748
Jan-Oct 2025	Ten months	38,934

Source: BNN, Indonesia Drug Report 2025; BNN/Polri official case-release data. The periods are not directly comparable and are presented only as context.

The revised table deliberately avoids a four-year trend series that could not be verified on a like-for-like basis. Indonesia Drug Report 2025 records 46,748 narcotics cases for 2024.⁶ The joint Bareskrim-Police regional disclosure attended by BNN reported 38,934 narcotics crime cases for January-October 2025.⁷ Because the 2025 figure covers only ten months, it must not be interpreted as proof of an annual decline from 2024.

This correction also resolves the numerical discrepancy in the reviewed manuscript, which alternated between 38,394 and 38,934 cases for 2025. The verified official BNN release states 38,934 cases for January-October 2025. The more important analytical point is that aggregate case counts do not measure the success of local prevention programs; they reflect enforcement, reporting, and detection as well as underlying offending.⁸

Patterns of drug use and distribution increasingly interact with consumer technologies. Vaping devices can conceal psychoactive substances in familiar products, while cartridge formats and flavored liquids may make harmful content difficult for users or front-line officers to identify visually. International studies have documented the use of electronic cigarettes to vaporize cannabis among adolescents and other users.⁹ National legal scholarship likewise identifies narcotic-laced vape liquids as a developing enforcement and classification problem in Indonesia.¹⁰

⁵Indonesia, Minister of Health Regulation Number 15 of 2025 concerning Changes in Narcotics Classification, promulgated November 28, 2025.

⁶Badan Narkotika Nasional Republik Indonesia, Indonesia Drug Report 2025 (Jakarta: Pusat Penelitian, Data, dan Informasi BNN, 2025).

⁷Badan Narkotika Nasional Republik Indonesia, "Sinergi Kian Solid, Kepala BNN RI Hadiri Pengungkapan Kasus Narkoba Skala Besar oleh Bareskrim Polri," October 23, 2025, <https://bnn.go.id/sinergi-kian-solid-kepala-bnn-ri-hadiri-pengungkapan-kasus-narkoba-skala-besar-oleh-bareskrim-polri/>.

⁸Badan Narkotika Nasional Republik Indonesia, "Sinergi Kian Solid, Kepala BNN RI Hadiri Pengungkapan Kasus Narkoba Skala Besar oleh Bareskrim Polri," October 23, 2025, <https://bnn.go.id/sinergi-kian-solid-kepala-bnn-ri-hadiri-pengungkapan-kasus-narkoba-skala-besar-oleh-bareskrim-polri/>.

⁹Meghan E. Morean et al., "High School Students' Use of Electronic Cigarettes to Vaporize Cannabis," *Pediatrics* 136, no. 4 (2015): 611-616, <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2015-1727>.

¹⁰Rantika Dinda Sastriyanti and Miftakhul Huda, "Ratio Legis Liquid Vape yang Mengandung Narkotika Dalam Pidana Narkotika," *Jurnal Ilmu Hukum, Humaniora dan Politik* 6, no. 4 (2026): 3126-3138, <https://doi.org/10.38035/jihhp.v6i4.8465>.

Youth prevention therefore requires more than generic anti-drug messaging. Evidence from systematic reviews suggests that school-based drug prevention is more likely to be useful when it is interactive, developmentally appropriate, and linked to skills rather than relying only on one-way information delivery.¹¹ A recent scoping review similarly emphasizes the importance of facilitator quality and contextual adaptation in school-based prevention.¹² These findings support a targeted prevention model that explains the specific risks of vape liquids, uncertainty about product contents, and legally relevant substances.

Vaping should not itself be equated with narcotics abuse. Nevertheless, studies of adolescent e-cigarette and cannabis behavior show that vaping and cannabis-related risk perceptions can intersect, and that some youth use electronic cigarettes to consume cannabis.¹³ This evidence justifies treating young vape users as a relevant prevention audience without assuming that every vape user consumes narcotics.¹⁴

In Medan, the legal and operational concern became concrete through publicly documented enforcement events involving etomidate-containing or suspected etomidate vape products. Such incidents are relevant to prevention because they demonstrate an adaptive delivery method, but they do not establish the prevalence of narcotic-laced vape use in the population. The events below are therefore used as contextual case signals rather than epidemiological evidence.

Pranata, Budiarta, and Karma examined BNN's role in responding to liquid vape containing narcotics.¹⁵ Qorisa examined the performance of BNNP Sumut in general drug-prevention efforts in Medan.¹⁶ Bangun and Trimurni examined collaborative drug-prevention governance in Medan.¹⁷ The gap addressed here is narrower: how the current post-2025 classification regime, BNNP Sumut's

¹¹Pim Cuijpers, "Effective Ingredients of School-Based Drug Prevention Programs: A Systematic Review," *Addictive Behaviors* 27, no. 6 (2002): 1009-1023, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0306-4603\(02\)00295-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0306-4603(02)00295-2).

¹²Sunandar Said et al., "School-Based Interventions for Drug Use Prevention Among Adolescents: A Scoping Review," *Journal of School Health* 96, no. 3 (2026): e70122, <https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.70122>.

¹³Ronja Kleine et al., "Association of Cigarette and E-Cigarette Use with Cannabis-Related Risk Perceptions and Intentions," *Journal of Cannabis Research* 7 (2025): 31, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42238-025-00288-6>.

¹⁴Elizabeth K. Do et al., "Cannabis and Vaping Nicotine: An Exploration of Risk Factors Using a Nationally Representative Sample of Youth and Young Adults," *Addictive Behaviors* 157 (2024): 108094, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2024.108094>.

¹⁵Yoga Wira Pranata, I Nyoman Putu Budiarta, and Ni Made Sukaryati Karma, "Peranan Badan Narkotika Nasional dalam Menanggulangi Tindak Pidana Liquid Vape yang Mengandung Narkotika," *Jurnal Preferensi Hukum* 3, no. 1 (2022): 201-207, <https://doi.org/10.22225/jph.3.1.4684.201-207>.

¹⁶Oudry Qorisa, "Kinerja Badan Narkotika Nasional Provinsi (BNNP) Sumatera Utara Dalam Upaya Pencegahan Narkotika Di Kota Medan," *SAJJANA: Public Administration Review* 2, no. 2 (2024): 122-139, <https://doi.org/10.32734/sajjana.v2i2.19726>.

¹⁷Putri Nurul Afifah Bangun and Februati Trimurni, "Kolaborasi Pemerintah dalam Upaya Pencegahan Penyalahgunaan Narkotika di Kota Medan," *Reslaj: Religion Education Social Laa Roiba Journal* 7, no. 11 (2025): 3335-3349, <https://doi.org/10.47467/reslaj.v7i11.10022>.

provincial mandate, and process-level prevention benchmarks interact when the delivery medium is a vape product.

This study consequently distinguishes three questions that are often conflated: whether a substance is legally classified as a narcotic; whether BNNP Sumut has institutional competence to undertake preventive action; and whether available evidence demonstrates implementation adequacy or outcome effectiveness. Only the first two can be resolved predominantly through legal materials. Outcome effectiveness requires reliable indicators and a research design capable of attributing behavioral change to an intervention.

The research questions are: first, how is the preventive role of BNNP Sumut legally and institutionally implemented in relation to narcotic-laced vape liquids among residents of Medan City; and second, what legal, technical, social, and evidentiary obstacles limit that implementation? The contribution is an integrated legal-empirical assessment that links institutional mandate to observable prevention processes while expressly limiting claims that the available evidence cannot support.

Table 2. Traceable Publicly Reported Discoveries of Etomidate Vape Products in the Medan Area

No.	Date / Area	Publicly Reported Event	Relevance to Prevention
1	9-10 Dec 2025 / Medan City	Bareskrim Polri disclosed a clandestine operation producing etomidate vape products in Medan and arrested Muhammad Rafi; police linked the operation to a Malaysia-Indonesia supply network.	Shows cross-border sourcing, concealed product format, and the need for rapid legal and risk-message updates.
2	29-31 Jul 2026 / Medan-Deli Serdang	BNNP Sumut disclosed an operation involving four suspects and 261 vape cartridges suspected of containing etomidate across locations in Medan and Deli Serdang.	Shows the need for intelligence-to-prevention coordination, laboratory confirmation, and locally targeted communication.

Selection criteria: publicly traceable events in Medan or the immediate Medan-Deli Serdang network involving vape products and etomidate, reported by official law-enforcement or established public-service media. The events are contextual and are not a prevalence sample.¹⁸

The December 2025 event involved a clandestine vape-production operation in Medan linked by police to a Malaysia-Indonesia network.¹⁹ The July 2026 BNNP Sumut operation involved four suspects and 261 vape cartridges suspected of containing etomidate across Medan and Deli Serdang locations.²⁰ These events show why prevention must be coordinated with enforcement intelligence, laboratory

¹⁸Tribrata News Polri, "Bareskrim Ungkap Lab Vape Etomidate, Pelaku Terhubung Jaringan di Malaysia," December 10, 2025, <https://tribrataneews.polri.go.id/blog/nasional-3/bareskrim-ungkap-lab-vape-etomidate-pelaku-terhubung-jaringan-di-malaysia-96358>.

¹⁹Tribrata News Polri, "Bareskrim Ungkap Lab Vape Etomidate, Pelaku Terhubung Jaringan di Malaysia," December 10, 2025, <https://tribrataneews.polri.go.id/blog/nasional-3/bareskrim-ungkap-lab-vape-etomidate-pelaku-terhubung-jaringan-di-malaysia-96358>.

²⁰Radio Republik Indonesia, "BNNP Sumut Bongkar Jaringan Pod Getar, Empat Tersangka Ditangkap," July 31, 2026, <https://rri.co.id/medan/hukum/kriminalitas/2617383/bnnp-sumut-bongkar-jaringan-pod-getar-empat-tersangka-ditangkap>.

confirmation, and rapidly updated legal information, but they do not by themselves establish the scale of use among Medan residents.

The national legal mandate begins with Law Number 35 of 2009, which assigns BNN functions in prevention and eradication of narcotics abuse and illicit trafficking.²¹ Presidential Regulation Number 23 of 2010, as amended by Presidential Regulation Number 47 of 2019, further structures BNN's institutional functions.²² These national provisions must then be connected to the authority of BNNP Sumut as a vertical agency operating at provincial level.

That connection is supplied by BNN Regulation Number 6 of 2020, as partially amended by BNN Regulation Number 1 of 2024. Under this organizational framework, a provincial BNN office implements BNN tasks, functions, and authority within the province and performs coordination, technical policy implementation, guidance, cooperation, evaluation, and reporting functions in the P4GN field. This is the direct legal basis for analyzing BNNP Sumut's preventive role rather than treating the provincial office as if it held an unspecified derivative mandate.²³

The provincial mandate includes prevention and community empowerment, coordination with government and community actors, technical supervision of district/city BNN units, and evaluation and reporting. These functions support preventive communication, inter-agency coordination, and evidence collection in Medan, while enforcement functions remain subject to the allocation of authority in narcotics law and BNN's internal organization.²⁴

For this study, 'prevention' is evaluated at the process level. The benchmarks are: alignment of activities with the legal mandate; specificity of the target population and risk message; documentary evidence of program delivery; readiness to refer suspected substances for laboratory identification and coordinate with competent institutions; and use of monitoring or evaluation instruments. BNN's DEKTARI framework is relevant because it treats youth self-resilience through self-regulation, assertiveness, and reaching out as measurable prevention-related indicators.²⁵

The use of process benchmarks avoids importing unrelated models of institutional performance. It also avoids an analogy to corruption prevention, which was present in the earlier draft but is too remote from the legal and behavioral characteristics of narcotics prevention. The analytical comparison is instead

²¹Indonesia, Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics, arts. 4 and 64-70.

²²Indonesia, Presidential Regulation Number 23 of 2010 concerning the National Narcotics Agency, as amended by Presidential Regulation Number 47 of 2019.

²³Indonesia, National Narcotics Agency Regulation Number 6 of 2020 concerning Organization and Work Procedures of Provincial and Regency/City National Narcotics Agencies, arts. 1-3, as amended by National Narcotics Agency Regulation Number 1 of 2024.

²⁴Indonesia, National Narcotics Agency Regulation Number 6 of 2020 concerning Organization and Work Procedures of Provincial and Regency/City National Narcotics Agencies, art. 3, as amended by National Narcotics Agency Regulation Number 1 of 2024.

²⁵Badan Narkotika Nasional Republik Indonesia, "DEKTARI - Indeks Ketahanan Diri Anti Narkoba," accessed September 16, 2026, <https://dektari.bnn.go.id/>.

anchored in P4GN instruments and drug-prevention literature that directly addresses youth, risk communication, and institutional coordination.

Against this background, the article examines what BNNP Sumut is legally expected to do, what the two interviewed officials reported that the institution actually does, what official documentation can corroborate, and where evidence remains insufficient. This structure makes clear the difference between a documented activity, a process-level assessment, and an outcome claim.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses an empirical legal method combining statutory and documentary analysis with limited field interviews.²⁶ Primary legal materials include Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics, Presidential Regulation Number 23 of 2010 as amended by Presidential Regulation Number 47 of 2019, BNN Regulation Number 6 of 2020 as amended by BNN Regulation Number 1 of 2024, and Minister of Health Regulation Number 15 of 2025. Sori Tua Sihombing, a Senior Expert-Level Drug Prevention Educator, was purposively selected and interviewed in Medan on 6 July 2026.²⁷ Julius Hutapea, an administrative/data-reporting staff member, was purposively selected and interviewed in Medan on 2 July 2026.²⁸ The interviews were semi-structured and focused on preventive activities, organizational responsibilities, identification constraints, target groups, and documentation. The small informant pool is a limitation and does not support population-level generalization. Interview statements were therefore triangulated with legislation, BNN prevention instruments, BNN/Police case releases, and traceable public records. The analysis applies five implementation benchmarks - legal-mandate alignment, target-group and message specificity, documented delivery, technical/inter-agency readiness, and monitoring/evaluation - and uses Soerjono Soekanto's factors of legal substance, law enforcers, facilities, society, and legal culture only as a supplementary framework for classifying obstacles.²⁹

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Preventive Role of BNNP Sumut in Relation to Narcotic-Laced Vape Liquids in Medan City

BNNP Sumut's role must first be located within its statutory chain of authority. The provincial office is a vertical BNN agency and is responsible for implementing BNN tasks and functions within North Sumatra, including prevention, community empowerment, coordination, technical guidance, evaluation, and reporting. This organizational rule converts the broad national prevention mandate into a specific

²⁶Jonaedi Efendi and Johnny Ibrahim, *Metode Penelitian Hukum Normatif Empiris* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2018).

²⁷Sori Tua Sihombing, Senior Expert-Level Drug Prevention Educator, BNNP Sumut, interview by the author, Medan, July 6, 2026.

²⁸Julius Hutapea, Administrative/Data-Reporting Staff, BNNP Sumut, interview by the author, Medan, July 2, 2026.

²⁹Soerjono Soekanto, *Faktor-Faktor yang Mempengaruhi Penegakan Hukum* (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2019).

provincial competence and provides the legal basis for activities directed at Medan residents.³⁰

The empirical material indicates that BNNP Sumut treats narcotic-laced vape products as part of the broader P4GN prevention agenda rather than as a wholly separate program. Sori Tua Sihombing reported that prevention is delivered through communication, information, education, outreach, and community participation, with messages adjusted to emerging modes of drug use.³¹ This is consistent with prior research describing the prevention role of BNNP Sumut and its demand-reduction orientation in Medan.³²

From a legal-policy perspective, that approach is appropriate only if the communication is substance-accurate. Prevention messaging should explain that a vape device is not itself a narcotic, that controlled status attaches to the substance and applicable schedule, and that the legal classification can change as new psychoactive substances are scheduled. This distinction is particularly important for etomidate because its regulatory status changed in late 2025.³³

Targeting adolescents and young adults is also justified as a risk-communication strategy, but local claims must be supported carefully. International evidence shows that some adolescents use e-cigarettes to vaporize cannabis and that e-cigarette use can coexist with lower cannabis-related risk perceptions. Those findings do not establish the same prevalence in Medan, but they support youth-specific prevention content that addresses product uncertainty, peer influence, and refusal skills.³⁴

Effective prevention cannot be inferred from the number of seminars alone. Systematic reviews of school-based programs emphasize interaction, skills development, program intensity, and appropriate delivery rather than passive information transfer.³⁵ BNN's own DEKTARI instrument similarly provides a measurable framework for self-regulation, assertiveness, and reaching-out capacities among youth. For BNNP Sumut, this means that attendance records

³⁰Indonesia, National Narcotics Agency Regulation Number 6 of 2020 concerning Organization and Work Procedures of Provincial and Regency/City National Narcotics Agencies, arts. 1-3, as amended by National Narcotics Agency Regulation Number 1 of 2024.

³¹Sori Tua Sihombing, Senior Expert-Level Drug Prevention Educator, BNNP Sumut, interview by the author, Medan, July 6, 2026.

³²Oudry Qorisa, "Kinerja Badan Narkotika Nasional Provinsi (BNNP) Sumatera Utara Dalam Upaya Pencegahan Narkoba Di Kota Medan," *SAJJANA: Public Administration Review* 2, no. 2 (2024): 122-139, <https://doi.org/10.32734/sajjana.v2i2.19726>.

³³Deva Alfianto Supardi and Yuliana Putri, "Etomidate dalam Rokok Elektronik: Pertanggungjawaban Pidana dan Perubahan Rezim Hukum Kesehatan di Indonesia," *Forschungsforum Law Journal* 3, no. 2 (2026): 151-164, <https://doi.org/10.35586/flj.v3i02.14097>.

³⁴Ronja Kleine et al., "Association of Cigarette and E-Cigarette Use with Cannabis-Related Risk Perceptions and Intentions," *Journal of Cannabis Research* 7 (2025): 31, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42238-025-00288-6>.

³⁵Fabrizio Faggiano et al., "School-Based Prevention for Illicit Drugs Use: A Systematic Review," *Preventive Medicine* 46, no. 5 (2008): 385-396, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ypmed.2007.11.012>.

should be linked, where appropriate, to pre/post or periodic resilience measures and follow-up documentation.³⁶

Community participation is another component of the provincial mandate. Research on prevention governance in Medan reports collaboration among BNNP Sumut, regional government actors, community organizations, and family-focused programs, while also identifying resource and participation constraints. Such collaboration is especially relevant for vape-related risks because schools, families, health services, law enforcement, and digital-platform monitoring each hold different information and intervention capacities.³⁷

The reviewed evidence supports a finding that preventive roles are being performed, but not a finding that they are behaviorally effective. The two interviews confirm institutional activities and perceived challenges, while official instruments confirm that BNN has measurable prevention tools. They do not establish a counterfactual showing how drug-use behavior in Medan would have changed without those activities. The appropriate conclusion is therefore one of implementation, not causal effectiveness.

A process-level assessment is nevertheless possible. First, the activities described are aligned with the provincial mandate because they concern prevention, information, community empowerment, and coordination. Second, risk communication is becoming more specific to vape products, although the reviewed material does not document a standardized curriculum devoted to narcotic-laced vape liquids. Third, program delivery is supported by interview testimony, but frequency, reach, participant characteristics, and follow-up outcomes are not consistently documented in the material supplied for this study.

Fourth, laboratory readiness is essential because visual inspection cannot establish whether a liquid contains a controlled substance. The changing legal classification of new psychoactive substances reinforces the need for rapid communication between prevention staff, investigators, health authorities, and competent laboratories. Fifth, monitoring should distinguish activity outputs, such as the number of events or participants, from outcomes, such as changes in knowledge, resilience, refusal skills, or substance-use behavior.³⁸

The legal mandate therefore supports a layered preventive model: accurate legal information; youth-specific risk communication; community participation; early warning from enforcement and health data; and evaluation. The model does not require BNNP Sumut to treat every vaping behavior as narcotics abuse. Rather, it requires prevention to focus on identifiable risks and controlled substances while avoiding stigmatization of lawful users.

³⁶Badan Narkotika Nasional Republik Indonesia, "DEKTARI - Indeks Ketahanan Diri Anti Narkoba," accessed September 16, 2026, <https://dektari.bnn.go.id/>.

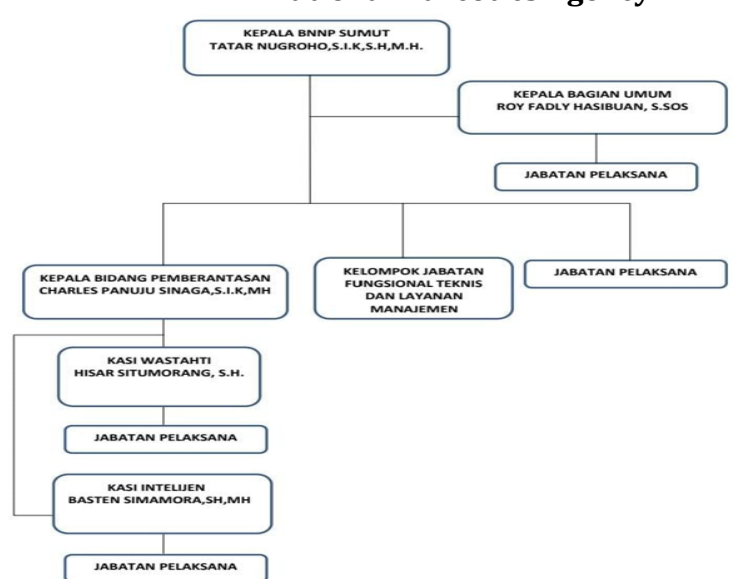
³⁷Putri Nurul Afifah Bangun and Februati Trimurni, "Kolaborasi Pemerintah dalam Upaya Pencegahan Penyalahgunaan Narkoba di Kota Medan," *Reslaj: Religion Education Social Laa Roiba Journal* 7, no. 11 (2025): 3335-3349, <https://doi.org/10.47467/reslaj.v7i11.10022>.

³⁸Indonesia, Minister of Health Regulation Number 15 of 2025 concerning Changes in Narcotics Classification.

The practical boundary between prevention and enforcement is equally important. Prevention officers can use enforcement findings to update risk messages, but criminal allegations must remain within evidentiary and procedural safeguards. The December 2025 and July 2026 etomidate events are therefore useful warning signals, not proof that narcotic-laced vape use is common among Medan residents.

This distinction improves both legality and public communication. Overstating prevalence can undermine trust, while understating new delivery methods can leave prevention messages obsolete. BNNP Sumut's strongest role is therefore to translate verified intelligence and legal changes into timely, proportionate, audience-specific prevention.

Figure 1. Organizational Structure of the North Sumatra Provincial National Narcotics Agency



Source: Interview material provided by Sori Tua Sihombing, Senior Expert-Level Drug Prevention Educator, BNNP Sumut, Medan, 6 July 2026.³⁹

The organizational structure is relevant because prevention is not performed in isolation. The provincial office must coordinate prevention and community-empowerment functions with administration, rehabilitation, eradication, legal/cooperation services, and district/city units where applicable. The organizational regulation expressly places coordination, technical implementation, guidance, and evaluation within the BNNP functional framework.⁴⁰

- a) Within that structure, prevention personnel translate national P4GN policies into local communication and education activities.
- b) Community-empowerment functions support participation by schools, families, workplaces, and civil-society actors.

³⁹Sori Tua Sihombing, Senior Expert-Level Drug Prevention Educator, BNNP Sumut, interview by the author, Medan, July 6, 2026.

⁴⁰Indonesia, National Narcotics Agency Regulation Number 6 of 2020 concerning Organization and Work Procedures of Provincial and Regency/City National Narcotics Agencies, art. 3, as amended by National Narcotics Agency Regulation Number 1 of 2024.

- c) Coordination with enforcement and laboratory functions is necessary when a suspicious product requires substance identification rather than visual assessment.
- d) Evaluation and reporting functions should preserve records of target groups, activity reach, follow-up, and measurable prevention indicators.
- e) These functions form the institutional basis for assessing process adequacy without presuming outcome effectiveness.

Interview data indicate that BNNP Sumut conducts preventive communication through outreach and education concerning evolving drug risks. The interviewee described vape-related narcotics as an issue that requires updated public messaging because the product format may appear familiar and the content may not be visible to users. This finding is treated as institutional testimony and is not generalized to all Medan residents.⁴¹

The available public record also demonstrates that vape-related drug risks in the Medan area are not hypothetical. Police publicly disclosed a Medan etomidate-vape operation in December 2025.⁴² BNNP Sumut publicly disclosed a separate operation involving suspected etomidate cartridges in July 2026.⁴³ These enforcement events can lawfully inform prevention planning by identifying product forms, distribution patterns, and target audiences, subject to the presumption of innocence and the limits of publicly verified facts.

A stronger prevention model would formally link this intelligence to communication products. When a new substance is scheduled or a new delivery method emerges, BNNP Sumut should maintain a documented update process for educators, schools, community partners, and relevant local agencies. The process should identify the legal status of the substance, health risks supported by competent sources, signs of unsafe products, and referral/reporting channels.

The prevention literature supports interactive rather than exclusively lecture-based delivery. Cuijpers' systematic review identified interactivity and other program characteristics as important ingredients in school-based drug prevention.⁴⁴ Soole, Mazerolle, and Rombouts likewise found that interactive and sufficiently intensive programs were associated with more favorable outcomes.⁴⁵ These findings

⁴¹Sori Tua Sihombing, Senior Expert-Level Drug Prevention Educator, BNNP Sumut, interview by the author, Medan, July 6, 2026.

⁴²Tribrata News Polri, "Bareskrim Ungkap Lab Vape Etomidate, Pelaku Terhubung Jaringan di Malaysia," December 10, 2025, <https://tribratanews.polri.go.id/blog/nasional-3/bareskrim-ungkap-lab-vape-etomidate-pelaku-terhubung-jaringan-di-malaysia-96358>.

⁴³Radio Republik Indonesia, "BNNP Sumut Bongkar Jaringan Pod Getar, Empat Tersangka Ditangkap," July 31, 2026, <https://rri.co.id/medan/hukum/kriminalitas/2617383/bnnp-sumut-bongkar-jaringan-pod-getar-empat-tersangka-ditangkap>.

⁴⁴Pim Cuijpers, "Effective Ingredients of School-Based Drug Prevention Programs: A Systematic Review," *Addictive Behaviors* 27, no. 6 (2002): 1009-1023, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0306-4603\(02\)00295-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0306-4603(02)00295-2).

⁴⁵David W. Soole, Lorraine Mazerolle, and Sacha Rombouts, "School-Based Drug Prevention Programs: A Review of What Works," *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology* 41, no. 2 (2008): 259-286, <https://doi.org/10.1375/acri.41.2.259>.

provide a better comparator for BNNP prevention than unrelated enforcement fields.

For youth exposed to vaping culture, messaging should also address risk perception without moral panic. Studies of adolescent vaping and cannabis show that product experimentation and risk perception are related in complex ways. Prevention should therefore explain uncertainty about liquid composition, encourage refusal and help-seeking skills, and avoid unsupported claims that every e-cigarette contains illicit drugs.⁴⁶

Digital distribution creates a separate governance need. Publicly reported vape-drug cases indicate cross-border or networked supply, while consumer discovery and sales can occur through online channels. BNNP Sumut should integrate legally authorized digital-risk monitoring with cooperation involving BNN headquarters, police, customs, health authorities, and platform or telecommunications actors when statutory conditions are met. Any monitoring must respect privacy, due process, and institutional competence.

Documentation is the clearest weakness in the material available for this study. Neither interview evidence nor the supplied records provide a complete dataset showing how many vape-specific education activities were conducted, who participated, whether knowledge or resilience changed, or whether behavior changed over time. This evidentiary limitation means that terms such as 'effective' or 'successful' should not be used as outcome conclusions.

BNN already possesses tools that can support stronger evaluation. DEKTARI operationalizes youth anti-drug resilience through self-regulation, assertiveness, and reaching out and connects the instrument to BNNP/BNNK information and education activities. Adapting existing evaluation tools to vape-specific modules would allow BNNP Sumut to measure more than attendance while remaining within an established institutional framework.⁴⁷

Accordingly, the empirical findings establish the presence of preventive activity and institutional awareness, while the normative analysis identifies what more is required for demonstrable process quality. The most defensible characterization is that BNNP Sumut is implementing its preventive role, but the available evidence is insufficient to determine the behavioral effectiveness of those measures among Medan residents.

This conclusion also reconciles the title, objective, method, and evidence. The article evaluates the role of BNNP Sumut and the adequacy of implementation processes; it does not attempt to estimate prevalence or prove that prevention caused a reduction in narcotics abuse.

⁴⁶Elizabeth K. Do et al., "Cannabis and Vaping Nicotine: An Exploration of Risk Factors Using a Nationally Representative Sample of Youth and Young Adults," *Addictive Behaviors* 157 (2024): 108094, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2024.108094>.

⁴⁷Badan Narkotika Nasional Republik Indonesia, "DEKTARI - Indeks Ketahanan Diri Anti Narkoba," accessed September 16, 2026, <https://dektari.bnn.go.id/>.

The resulting legal-empirical framework can be replicated in future research using broader informant samples, program records, participant surveys, and pre/post measures to test outcome effectiveness more rigorously.

Obstacles to Preventing the Abuse of Narcotic-Laced Vape Liquids in Medan City

The obstacles identified by the study can be grouped into legal-substance, institutional, facility, social, and evidentiary dimensions. This classification is compatible with Soerjono Soekanto's account of factors affecting law enforcement, but the categories are applied here specifically to narcotics prevention rather than as a substitute for the P4GN legal mandate.⁴⁸

The first obstacle is technical identification. A suspicious vape liquid cannot reliably be classified as a narcotic by color, odor, packaging, or appearance alone. Sori Tua Sihombing emphasized that confirmation requires competent testing and coordination rather than visual judgment. The legal consequence is significant because criminal classification must attach to an identified scheduled substance, not merely to a product format.⁴⁹

The second obstacle is regulatory adaptation. New psychoactive substances can emerge before they are included in a narcotics schedule, as the etomidate transition demonstrates. Prevention materials must therefore state the current legal classification accurately and be updated when the Ministry of Health changes the schedules.⁵⁰

1. Laboratory Identification and Early Detection

Laboratory capacity and referral speed affect how quickly prevention staff can communicate verified information. BNNP Sumut should establish a documented pathway for forwarding suspicious vape samples through competent investigative and laboratory channels, recording the substance identified, date of confirmation, applicable schedule, and the prevention message triggered by the result.

This is also an inter-agency issue. Vape products may involve narcotics law, health-product regulation, customs controls, and digital or cross-border distribution. The clandestine Medan etomidate operation disclosed by Bareskrim Polri illustrates the value of information originating from customs and law-enforcement coordination.⁵¹

Process adequacy should therefore be measured by referral protocols, turnaround of verified information, coordination records, and documented updates

⁴⁸Soerjono Soekanto, *Faktor-Faktor yang Mempengaruhi Penegakan Hukum* (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2019).

⁴⁹Sori Tua Sihombing, Senior Expert-Level Drug Prevention Educator, BNNP Sumut, interview by the author, Medan, July 6, 2026.

⁵⁰Deva Alfianto Supardi and Yuliana Putri, "Etomidate dalam Rokok Elektronik: Pertanggungjawaban Pidana dan Perubahan Rezim Hukum Kesehatan di Indonesia," *Forschungsforum Law Journal* 3, no. 2 (2026): 151-164, <https://doi.org/10.35586/flj.v3i02.14097>.

⁵¹Tribrata News Polri, "Bareskrim Ungkap Lab Vape Etomidate, Pelaku Terhubung Jaringan di Malaysia," December 10, 2025, <https://tribratanews.polri.go.id/blog/nasional-3/bareskrim-ungkap-lab-vape-etomidate-pelaku-terhubung-jaringan-di-malaysia-96358>.

to communication materials, rather than by assuming that detection automatically produces prevention outcomes.

The absence of such records in the material reviewed is an evidentiary gap, not proof that coordination does not occur.

2. Youth Risk Perception, Product Uncertainty, and Communication

One BNNP Sumut informant reported a perception that vaping can be viewed by some young people as fashionable or socially acceptable. Because this statement comes from institutional experience rather than a representative survey of Medan adolescents, it is presented as an informant perception and not as a population fact.⁵²

External research provides a more appropriate basis for the general risk proposition. Kleine and colleagues found associations between e-cigarette use and cannabis-related risk perceptions among adolescents.⁵³ Miech and colleagues found that youth may vape substances other than nicotine in a national survey conducted outside Indonesia.⁵⁴ These studies cannot be directly generalized to Medan, but they support a prevention strategy that explicitly addresses uncertainty about vape contents and substance-specific harms.

Risk communication should be targeted rather than alarmist. It should distinguish ordinary nicotine products from products containing scheduled narcotics, explain that appearance cannot establish content, identify warning signs and reporting channels, and reinforce refusal skills and peer-resistance capacities. This approach is consistent with evidence favoring interactive and skills-based youth drug prevention.⁵⁵

The third obstacle is evidence of reach and outcomes. Activity reports can demonstrate that an event occurred, but they do not show whether knowledge, attitudes, resilience, or behavior changed. BNNP Sumut should therefore record participant characteristics, target setting, content delivered, facilitator, follow-up, and outcome indicator where feasible.

The fourth obstacle is adaptive distribution. Vape products can move through informal networks, cross-regional channels, and online communication. Prevention units need timely intelligence from enforcement partners and legally compliant digital-risk monitoring so that education messages do not lag behind emerging products.

Taken together, these obstacles show that the central challenge is not an absence of legal authority. It is the ability to translate a broad prevention mandate

⁵²Sori Tua Sihombing, Senior Expert-Level Drug Prevention Educator, BNNP Sumut, interview by the author, Medan, July 6, 2026.

⁵³Ronja Kleine et al., "Association of Cigarette and E-Cigarette Use with Cannabis-Related Risk Perceptions and Intentions," *Journal of Cannabis Research* 7 (2025): 31, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42238-025-00288-6>.

⁵⁴Richard Miech, Megan E. Patrick, Patrick M. O'Malley, and Lloyd D. Johnston, "What Are Kids Vaping? Results from a National Survey of US Adolescents," *Tobacco Control* 26, no. 4 (2017): 386-391, <https://doi.org/10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2016-053014>.

⁵⁵Pim Cuijpers, "Effective Ingredients of School-Based Drug Prevention Programs: A Systematic Review," *Addictive Behaviors* 27, no. 6 (2002): 1009-1023, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0306-4603\(02\)00295-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0306-4603(02)00295-2).

into substance-accurate messages, verified technical information, traceable program delivery, and measurable evaluation. The matrix below summarizes the corresponding benchmark and gap.

Table 3. Process-Level Assessment Matrix for Vape-Related Prevention

Benchmark	Observed Evidence	Assessment	Priority Gap / Response
Legal mandate alignment	Prevention, education, community participation, coordination are reported and consistent with BNNP functions.	Adequate at mandate level.	Maintain substance-specific legal updates and documented role allocation.
Targeted risk communication	Vape-related risks are recognized in interviews and public enforcement events.	Partially documented.	Develop standardized youth-specific vape modules and interactive delivery.
Laboratory / early detection	Visual identification is insufficient; coordination is required.	Operational dependency identified.	Formalize referral, confirmation, and rapid prevention-update protocols.
Digital / network adaptation	Public cases show networked and cross-border supply patterns.	Risk recognized; prevention evidence limited.	Use legally authorized digital-risk intelligence and partner coordination.
Monitoring and evaluation	BNN has DEKTARI tools, but article evidence lacks vape-specific outcome data.	Insufficient for outcome-effectiveness claim.	Record reach, follow-up, resilience/risk-perception measures, and outcomes.

CONCLUSION

BNNP Sumut has a clear legal basis to implement BNN prevention, community-empowerment, coordination, and evaluation functions at provincial level. In Medan, the available interview and documentary evidence shows that those functions are implemented through communication, information, education, community participation, and coordination regarding emerging drug risks, including vape-related modes. The current evidence supports a finding of role implementation, but it does not establish causal or population-level effectiveness.

The principal constraints are the need for laboratory confirmation of suspicious liquids, rapidly changing substance classifications and distribution methods, the risk of overgeneralizing youth perceptions from limited field evidence, and weak outcome documentation. Future BNNP Sumut practice should formalize laboratory and early-warning coordination; update legal-risk materials whenever narcotics schedules change; develop youth-specific, interactive vape-risk education; create legally grounded pathways for digital-market intelligence; and use DEKTARI or comparable indicators to document changes in resilience, knowledge, and risk perception.

Institutionally, BNNP Sumut should preserve records showing the target, frequency, reach, content, partner institutions, follow-up, and evaluation of vape-related prevention. Future research should broaden the number and type of informants, examine program files, include participant or community data, and use pre/post or longitudinal measures before drawing conclusions about behavioral effectiveness. These steps would strengthen accountability while keeping prevention consistent with legal certainty and evidence-based public communication.

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