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Oregon Chapter, American College of Emergency Physicians (O.C.E.P)

Testimony before the Senate Health Care Committee

February 2, 2016

SB 1559 Tobacco 21 amendments

Chair Monnes Anderson, Vice Chair Kruse and members of the committee, my name is Katy King and I'm here today representing the Oregon Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians (OR-ACEP). The chapter is a medical society that has represented physicians specializing in emergency medicine since 1971 and its members share a commitment to improve emergency healthcare for all Oregonians.

OR-ACEP supports the proposed amendments to SB 1559, which would raise the minimum age to purchase tobacco to 21.

Emergency physicians treat people every day who are suffering from the effects of tobacco-related disease. Dr. Sharon Meieran, a past president for the chapter, wants legislators to know the truth about what she sees in emergency rooms from "birth to death" regarding tobacco. Her patients include children who are hospitalized for asthma and pneumonia because their parents use tobacco. She also regularly sees elderly people with lung cancer and emphysema. But almost none of these patients started smoking as adults. They started smoking as teenagers and became addicted as teenagers. Their illnesses would have been preventable if they had not become addicted in their youth.

Restricting the age of sale to 21 will reduce tobacco use and experimentation among youth and will decrease tobacco-related illness and death.

The Institute of Medicine recently released a report stating that, if all states were to adopt an increase in the minimum age to purchase tobacco, there would be a 12 percent decrease in cigarette smoking prevalence across the nation by the year

2100. Furthermore, it would result in 250,000 fewer premature deaths from cigarette smoking among people born between 2000 and 2019.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I'd be pleased to answer any questions.