

TOBACCO 21 for Oregon

Dear Oregon State Legislators:

Tobacco use is the number one cause of preventable death in Oregon, contributing to 7,000 deaths¹ annually and costing Oregonians nearly \$3 billion a year in healthcare costs and lost productivity.² This harm falls hardest on lower-income Oregonians: those on the Oregon Health Plan smoke at three times the rate of other Oregonians.³ In an effort to combat tobacco use and prevent youth nicotine addiction, our organizations are collectively in support of raising the minimum age of sale for tobacco products, including inhalant delivery systems, to 21 years old in Oregon.

Both opponents of smoking and purveyors of cigarettes have long recognized the significance of adolescence and early adulthood as the period during which smoking behaviors are typically developed. Research shows that 80% of smokers begin smoking before the age of 18, and 95% of smokers begin smoking before they turn 21.⁴ Further, adolescents are still going through critical periods of brain growth. The U.S. Surgeon General reports that adolescents can become dependent on nicotine very rapidly, and at lower levels of consumption than adults.

Increasing the minimum sale age for tobacco products will protect kids under 18. Studies have shown that a large percentage of people buy tobacco for distribution to teens are under 21 years of age. According to the Institute of Medicine (IOM), raising the tobacco sale age will alter the peer group of high school students, who often access tobacco products through older individuals in their social networks. Raising the age of sale for tobacco products to 21 is projected to cause a 25% reduction in smoking initiation among 15-17 year olds.⁵

Action today will save Oregon lives. There are 68,000 Oregon kids alive today who will ultimately die prematurely from smoking.⁶ Raising the age of sale for tobacco products to 21 is projected to reduce smoking prevalence by 12% and reduce tobacco-related deaths by 10%. After full implementation, this would translate to approximately 700 fewer smoking-attributable deaths each year and 90,000 fewer smokers.⁷

To keep tobacco out of the hands of kids and prevent nicotine addiction, we urge your support for raising the age of sale for tobacco products, including inhalant delivery systems, to 21 years. Over 110 municipalities nationwide have already taken action to do so, as well as the state of Hawaii. Oregon should be next.

Sincerely,

¹ What is Killing Oregonians? The Public Health Perspective

<http://public.health.oregon.gov/DiseasesConditions/CommunicableDisease/CDSummaryNewsletter/Documents/2012/ohd6115.pdf>

² Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, "The Toll of Tobacco in Oregon," http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/facts_issues/toll_us/oregon

³ Oregon Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). See "Oregon Tobacco Facts Data Sources and Statistical Methods."

⁴ Calculated based on data in the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2013, <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/SAMHDA/>; see also Institute of Medicine, Public Health Implications of Raising the Minimum Age of Legal Access to Tobacco Products, Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2015, <http://iom.nationalacademies.org/Reports/2015/TobaccoMinimumAgeReport.aspx>

⁵ Institute of Medicine, Public Health Implications of Raising the Minimum Age of Legal Access to Tobacco Products, Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2015, <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2015/TobaccoMinimumAgeReport.aspx>

⁶ The Health Consequences of Smoking: 50 Years of Progress. A Report of the Surgeon General, 2014.

⁷ See 5



CHILDREN'S HEALTH *alliance*



22 Organizations Support “Tobacco 21 for Oregon”

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
 American Heart Association | American Stroke Association
 American Lung Association in Oregon
 APANO - Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon*
 Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids
 Children’s Health Alliance
 Children First for Oregon
 Coalition of Local Health Officials
 Healthy Kids Learn Better Coalition
 Oregon Chapter of the American College of
 Emergency Physicians
 Oregon Health Equity Alliance*

Oregon Medical Association
 Oregon Nurses Association
 Oregon Pediatric Society
 Oregon Public Health Association*
 Oregon School-Based Health Alliance *
 Oregon Women’s Rights Coalition*
 Preventing Tobacco Addiction Foundation
 Providence
 Tobacco Free Coalition of Oregon
 Tobacco 21
 Upstream Public Health

*Logo not pictured