

April 10, 2019

Oregon State Legislature
House Committee on Revenue
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: House Bill 2270- OAHHS Supports Increasing the Price of Tobacco

Chair Nathanson and members of the House Committee on Revenue:

On behalf of Oregon's 62 community hospitals and the patients they serve, the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems (OAHHS) **supports HB 2270** as an important and timely policy tool for improving the public's health. Raising the price of tobacco by \$2.00 per pack and taxing gateway tobacco products like e-cigarettes will save lives, prevent youth from starting tobacco and will lower health care costs for all Oregonians.

Tobacco use is the number one preventable cause of death and disease in Oregon. More people die from tobacco than from obesity, alcohol, motor vehicle accidents, fire arms and illicit drug use combined. Tobacco use is also a major risk factor for developing chronic diseases like cardiovascular disease, asthma and diabetes and can make it harder for patients to manage these conditions. Hospitals are on the front lines of acute patient care and consequently witness people with chronic diseases experiencing limitations in function, health, activity, and work, affecting the quality of their lives as well as the lives of their families.

Hospitals have been taking steps to protect patients, families, visitors, and employees from the harms of tobacco. Oregon's hospitals have been leaders in creating tobacco-free campuses and offering tobacco cessation supports such as the Oregon Tobacco Quit Line and FDA-approved nicotine replacement therapy. These efforts reduce secondhand smoke exposure and make it easier to quit tobacco. Still, 8,000 people die from tobacco-related disease and 1,400 youth start smoking each year. To fundamentally reduce the burden of tobacco in communities, Oregon needs to raise the price of tobacco products- the most effective tobacco control intervention recommended by the Surgeon General.

Oregon's hospitals urge you to support HB 2270.

Thank you,



Sean Kolmer
Senior Vice President of Policy and Strategy
Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems