



Native American Rehabilitation Association of the Northwest, Inc.
A Non-Profit Organization

House Committee on Revenue

Testimony provided by Jackie Mercer, Chief Executive Officer of the Native American Rehabilitation Association of the Northwest

April 11, 2019

Chair and members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to share with you today.
My Name is Jackie Mercer. I am the Director of NARA.

I am writing to express our support of House Bill 2270. We want to acknowledge and thank the State of Oregon for working with us on the critical issues of tobacco and vaping/inhalant products.

I personally have had the honor and privilege to be present with my mom, my aunt and my uncle as each of them passed on. Unfortunately the common issue for all their deaths was many years of smoking cigarettes. Two died from lung cancer, and one from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. My father's habit also caused his passing from smoking related cardiovascular disease.

The most painful part was not just losing them but trying to comfort them as they took their intensely painful last gasps for air.
They each suffered with excruciating pain.

All tried many times to quit and they felt guilt and shame at their failed efforts. Prolonged and regular exposure to second hand smoke created my own asthma issues which I developed as a young child in a house with smokers. A sad thing is that in those days they didn't know the risks nor the addictive nature of the tobacco products or the dangers involved. Honestly, I just don't want anyone to have to go through that. Parent, child or loved one.

To this day these tobacco products do harm in our urban Indian community. Data shows that American Indian and Alaska Native people have the highest rates of commercial tobacco use than any other racial or ethnic group.

- 40% of American Indian and Alaska Native adults in Oregon use commercial tobacco.
- Among youth, 28% of American Indian and Alaska Natives use commercial tobacco.

We know this is due in part to companies targeting our communities for generations and appropriating our cultures and traditions in their marketing.

Oyate Administration

1776 SW Madison St.
Portland, OR 97205
[p] 503-224-1044
[f] 503-274-4251

Residential Treatment Services

17645 NW St. Helens Hwy.
Portland, OR 97231
[p] 503-621-1069
[f] 503-621-0200

Outpatient Treatment Services

1631 SW Columbia St.
Portland, OR 97201
[p] 503-231-2641
[f] 503-231-1654

Tate' Topo

1310 SW 17th Ave.
Portland, OR 97201
[p] 503-231-2641
[f] 503-467-4077

Totem Lodge

1438 SE Division
Portland, OR 97202
[p] 503-548-0346
[f] 503-232-5959

Dental Clinic

12750 SE Stark St., Building E
Portland, OR 97233
[p] 971-347-3009
[f] 971-256-3277

Indian Health Clinic

15 N Morris St.
Portland, OR 97227
[p] 503-230-9875
[f] 503-230-9877

Wellness Center

12360 E. Burnside St. 2nd Floor
Portland, OR 97233
[p] 971-279-4800
[f] 971-279-2051

Child, Youth & Family Programs and Youth Residential Treatment Center

620 NE 2nd Street
Gresham, OR 97030
[p] 971-274-3757
[f] 503-921-5740

Our youth have also been targeted by flavoring, colors, positioning of products in stores and other efforts.

Intergenerational trauma is fertile ground for the sewing of bad seeds.

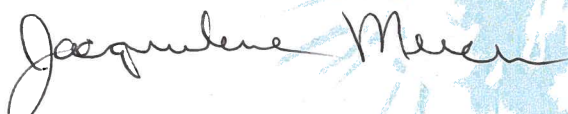
At NARA we have been offering both prevention and treatment services for our community. As you know it's very difficult to quit, particularly given the hundred plus number of addictive chemicals and the amount of sugar that is in every cigarette. We need additional resources in both treatment and prevention to overcome this huge disparity.

We need resources to help our communities heal and take back their lives.

I am writing to express our support for HB2270.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

Respectfully,


Jacqueline Mercer, CEO