



June 17, 2019

Co-Chairs Hass and Nathanson, and Members of the Joint Committee on Tax Expenditures,

OPCA is a non-profit organization, with a mission to support Oregon's 32 community health centers, also known as federally qualified health centers, in leading the transformation of primary care to achieve health equity for all. Community health centers deliver integrated primary care, including dental and behavioral health services, to over **433,000 Oregonians annually**. Community health centers are providers within the CCO networks, providing care to Oregon's underserved populations, **including one in four Oregon Health Plan members**.

Smoking is the number one cause of preventable death in Oregon and providers and care teams see firsthand how smoking related illnesses impact patients and their families. Oregon's community health centers serve patients who tobacco companies have targeted for decades, e.g., communities of color, tribes, low-income, and LGBTQ communities. And now, their advertising campaigns are marketing directly to Oregon's youth through nicotine-filled e-cigarette devices. Since 2017, the number of middle school aged kids who say they have tried an e-cigarette has increased by 48 percent, effectively creating a whole new generation of addicted smokers and leading to downstream health complications.

We also know that raising the price of tobacco and nicotine products is the single most effective tool to reducing use. A 10 percent increase in price will lead to a 4 percent decrease in adult consumption and a 7 percent decrease in youth consumption. This legislation will provide \$346 million dollars per biennia for the Oregon Health Plan, which provides health care for nearly 1 million Oregonians, as well as meaningful investments in community and culturally specific programs to address tobacco cessation and prevention programs.

As part of Oregon's safety net who cares for a large share of OHP patients, we understand that increasing the price of tobacco and e-cigarettes also means this directly impacts the patients we serve. And yet, as we strive to improve our patients' health through non-health measures (social determinants of health), it cannot be ignored that smoking is a social determinant of health. We take care of these patients, now with chronic conditions due to smoking - COPD, high blood pressure and cancers, in addition to asthmas/breathing complications brought on by homes with secondhand smoke. As a policy that stands to impact behavior and help health centers work with the patient to either decrease or cease smoking and in time, focus on the determinants of health that improve their overall health, we must wholly support this as a benefit to our patients.

OPCA believes HB 2270 is an opportunity to stabilize long-term health insurance costs and invest in the future of Oregon families, our communities, and our state's health outcomes, while simultaneously bending the cost curve in health care. We urge you to support HB 2270 as a statutory referral.

Thank you,

Danielle Sobel, MPH, Policy Director
Marty Carty, Policy Senior Manager