



6/17/2019

Attn: Joint Committee on Tax Expenditures

Greetings Co-Chairs Senator Haas and Representative Nathanson, Vice Chairs Senator Bentz, Representative Findley, Representative Marsh and members of the Joint Committee on Tax Expenditures,

I am writing on behalf of OHEA, the Oregon Health Equity Alliance, in support of HB 2270-A. OHEA is one of four Regional Health Equity Coalitions (RHEC) in Oregon. Our leadership organizations represent 5 culturally committee based organizations and the local public health institute, and we work collaboratively, through a cross sector approach to promote health equity in Oregon.

As a physician I understand that smoking is the number one cause of death in the US and disproportionately impacts communities of color. What I didn't learn in medical school was that racism and other social determinants of health such as housing and economic inequity in particular, contribute to the conditions that lead to smoking in communities of color.

As a coalition that uplifts racial justice informed health equity we recognize that a tax may disproportionately impact the communities we seek to serve. As a coalition we must consider the root causes of smoking and address these issues with a deep understanding that the social determinants of health play a significant role in smoking initiation and tobacco use. Addressing the root cause of the initiation and continued use of tobacco and e-cigarette use needs to be forefront in our work, as does ensuring we are having transparent conversations about how many communities most impacted are not at the decision making tables about this tax and subsequent allocation of funds generated.

We are strong supporters of ensuring that revenue generated from this effort is able to go directly to communities most impacted by health inequities and we believe that our communities' voices and their needs are central to conversations around increased funding and resource allocation. This is one of the reasons we are in support of HB 2270 and ask you to consider how these efforts will positively impact communities of color and others who have been intentionally targeted and disproportionately impacted by tobacco use and tobacco related health outcomes.

Thank you,

Zeenia Junkeer, ND
Director, Oregon Health Equity Alliance (OHEA)

