

June 17, 2019

Oregon State Legislature  
Joint Committee on Tax Expenditures  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

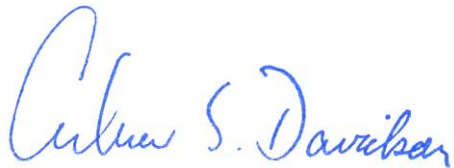
**Re: House Bill 2207A – Tobacco Tax**

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

On behalf of Oregon's 62 community hospitals and the patients they serve, the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems (OAHHS) supports HB 2270A 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 2270A.

Thank you,



Andy Davidson  
President and CEO  
Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems