



February 6, 2020

Chair Monnes Anderson, Vice-Chair Linthicum and Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care,

On behalf of the Oregon Primary Care Association (OPCA) we respectfully request your support for SB 1577.

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 flavored 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.

OPCA and community health centers support legislation which bans **all** flavors across combustibles and vaping devices alike and believe SB 1577 with the -6 amendment is the best policy for Oregon. We know flavored combustibles, flavored vaping products, and even specific flavors have been marketed specifically to minority communities and Oregon's youth, and thus believe the best path is to enact a comprehensive ban on flavors across the board.

OPCA also believes the perfect should never be the enemy of the good and therefore supports the base bill which seeks to take the first step. Progress which begins to chip away at the unprecedented growth in nicotine dependence, especially among Oregon's kids is critical. We stand ready to partner with our health care policy colleagues to improve the concept before you today and believe we cannot wait to address youth smoking rates.

We came before the legislature in support of the tobacco tax for the same reasons we support a flavor ban - we are eager for any opportunity to make tobacco as unappealing as possible for Oregon's kids.

Thank you,

Danielle Sobel, MPH, Policy and Governmental Affairs Senior Director  
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