

February 27, 2025

Senate Committee on Early Childhood and Behavioral Health
900 Court St. NE, S-409
Salem OR 97301

RE: Support for [SB 702](#)

Dear Chair Reynolds and members of the Senate Committee on Early Childhood and Behavioral Health,

Kaiser Permanente strongly supports SB 702 and ending the sale of all flavored tobacco in Oregon. Prohibiting the sale of flavored tobacco products without exceptions or exemptions is a huge step forward to preventing another generation of young people from living with a lifetime of addiction.

Kaiser Permanente exists to provide high-quality, affordable health care services and to improve the health of our members and the communities we serve. We serve more than 616,000 members in Oregon and Southwest Washington that access coverage through a variety of plans spanning the commercial, Medicaid and Medicare markets.

As the nation's largest non-profit integrated health care system, Kaiser Permanente is working to address upstream contributors to poor public health.

In Oregon, tobacco remains the leading cause of preventable death. Reducing tobacco use requires a multifaceted approach, starting with preventing youth and young adults from initiating tobacco use. The rapidly growing use of tobacco products among our nation's youth is one of the most critical public health issues currently facing our country. Flavored tobacco plays a key role in convincing young people to try tobacco products. Kid-friendly flavors like "cotton candy," "atomic fireball," and "sour mango" are marketed to appeal to underage users. Eight out of 10 youth who have tried tobacco started with a flavored product.

Kaiser Permanente providers routinely caution patients, especially youth and their parents and guardians, about the harmful effects of nicotine products. Vaping specifically poses many health risks for teens and young adults: inhaling nicotine harms brain development and can lead to addiction and the use of more harmful tobacco products; vaping has known short-term negative health effects and unknown long-term effects; and flavoring and other ingredients may be toxic. To ensure the future health of our communities we must help young people avoid becoming hooked on these addictive products for life.

We urge you to help protect the health of current and future Oregonians by voting to support the SB 702.

Sincerely,



Colin R. Cave, MD
Northwest Permanente, PC
Medical Director, External Affairs, Government Relations and Community Health
Department of Head and Neck Surgery.