

March 4, 2025

Oregon State Legislature
Senate Committee on Early Childhood and Behavioral Health
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301
Submitted electronically via OLIS

RE: SB 702, related to banning the sales of flavored tobacco products

Dear Chair Reynolds, Vice Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

The Hospital Association of Oregon supports SB 702, which would prohibit the sale of flavored tobacco products in Oregon. This legislation is an important step in protecting the health and well-being of our youth and communities.

Nearly all tobacco use begins in youth and young adulthood—and flavored tobacco products play a key role in initiating addiction, with more than three in four Oregon youth who use tobacco using flavored tobacco, compared to only 13% of adults over 35 years old.¹ Flavors like Cool Mint, Watermelon Ice, and Cotton Candy are designed to attract and hook young people, masking the harshness of tobacco and making it easier for them to start using these harmful products. The tobacco industry has spent decades targeting young people with these tactics, spending about \$100 million annually in Oregon alone on marketing, most of it in retail environments like convenience stores and grocery stores.²

Oregon has the opportunity to follow the lead of other states and localities that have already acted against flavored tobacco. Massachusetts, California, New Jersey, New York, and Rhode

¹ Oregon Health Authority, Oregon Tobacco Facts, [Oregon Health Authority : Oregon Tobacco Facts : Tobacco Prevention : State of Oregon](#)

² Oregon Health Authority, Oregon Tobacco Facts, [Oregon Health Authority : Oregon Tobacco Facts : Tobacco Prevention : State of Oregon](#)



Island have all enacted restrictions, along with more than 360 local jurisdictions across the country.³

The 2020 U.S. Surgeon General’s report states that banning flavors—including menthol—may help reduce youth initiation and help adult users quit.⁴ Smoking remains the leading cause of preventable death and disease in Oregon, claiming the lives of more than 8,000 Oregonians each year and costing the state more than \$5 billion annually in medical expenses and lost productivity.⁵

By passing SB 702, Oregon can take a stand against the tobacco industry and prioritize the health of our youth and vulnerable communities. We urge you to support this legislation and protect future generations from the consequences of tobacco addiction.

Sincerely,



Travis Meuwissen
Director of Government Affairs
Hospital Association of Oregon

About the Hospital Association of Oregon

Founded in 1934, the Hospital Association of Oregon (HAO) is a mission-driven, nonprofit trade association representing Oregon’s 61 hospitals. Together, hospitals are the sixth largest private employer statewide, employing more than 70,000 employees. Committed to fostering a stronger, safer, more equitable Oregon where all people have access to the high-quality care they need, the hospital association supports Oregon’s hospitals so they can support their communities; educates government officials and the public on the state’s health landscape, and works collaboratively with policymakers, community based organizations and the health care community to build consensus on and advance health care policy benefiting the state’s four million residents.

³ Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, Flavored Tobacco Sales Restrictions: Promising Evidence for Reducing Youth Access and Tobacco Use.

⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Smoking Cessation: A Report of the Surgeon General, 2020, chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/2020-cessation-sgr-full-report.pdf

⁵ Oregon Health Authority, Oregon Tobacco Facts, [Oregon Health Authority : Oregon Tobacco Facts : Tobacco Prevention : State of Oregon](#)

