

March 5, 2025

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

RE: Support for SB 702

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

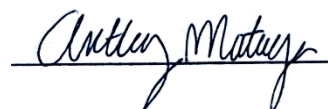
Health Share of Oregon is proud to support ending the sale of flavored tobacco products in Oregon. Health Share is our state's largest Coordinated Care Organization, serving over 470,000 members in Washington, Multnomah, and Clackamas Counties. Health Share was founded as a locally governed non-profit, bringing together the best of our region's health systems, county governments, and social service organizations.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide support for ending the sale of flavored tobacco products to stem an ongoing public health crisis that particularly affects our youth, and especially youth of color. Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death in Oregon at over 5,500 deaths annually – by intervening early and disincentivizing our state's children from beginning a lifetime of addiction and disease, we can prevent both suffering and provide savings to our health system.

The deliberate choice of tobacco companies to flavor their products to appeal to children with such flavors as watermelon, cotton candy, and others is intended to create dependence and addiction at early ages to ensure lifetime consumers. Eight out of ten youth begin their nicotine addictions with a flavored tobacco product, and 90% of youth who use e-cigarettes today do so with flavored products.

Please help interrupt this cycle of addiction and support SB 702.

Sincerely,



Anthony Montoya
Director, Public Policy
Health Share of Oregon