

May 21, 2025

Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue  
Oregon State Senate  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

**RE: Support for Senate Bill 702A**

Dear Chair Meek, Vice Chair McLane, and members of the Committee:

The National Council for Mental Wellbeing is a membership organization that drives policy on behalf of more than 3,200 mental health and substance use treatment organizations, their 1.4 million employees, and the more than 15 million children, adults, and families they serve. We would like to express our support of [SB702A](#), a bill that makes important progress in stopping the use of flavored tobacco by youth.

Smoking is a leading cause of preventable death and disease, and studies show that nearly all tobacco use begins during youth and young adulthood. According to pediatricians, cigarette smoking can set young individuals up for a lifetime of nicotine addiction and serious health conditions like heart disease and lung disease, as 95% of adults who smoke report they started before reaching the age of 21<sup>1</sup>. Each year Medicaid spends more than \$370 million in Oregon for health issues associated with smoking<sup>2</sup>.

Senate Bill 702A takes critical steps to significantly reduce youth access to flavored tobacco products and help ensure that these products are not being sold to children. The bill as amended will restrict the sale of flavored tobacco products to state licensed Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission (OLCC) stores which prohibit entry to individuals under the age of 21 unless they are accompanied by a parent, spouse, or domestic partner who is at least 21 years old.

Tobacco policies aimed to protect youth are directly related to youth behavioral health. Youth who are struggling with anxiety and depression may turn to flavored tobacco products as a perceived form of relief, which will unfortunately have the effect of intensifying their symptoms. Scientific research has shown us that nicotine increases irritability, anxiety, and depression. We appreciate your consideration and support of this important measure that will help protect the health of Oregon's youth.

Sincerely,



Reyna Taylor  
Senior Vice President, Public Policy and Advocacy  
National Council for Mental Wellbeing

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<sup>1</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> CDC, State Data Highlights, 2006 [and underlying CDC data/estimates], [stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/11827](https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/11827).