



Cascadia
HEALTH

Children's
Community Clinic

Health Centers of
University of
Western States

Mercy & Wisdom
Community Health
Clinic

NARA Indian Health
Clinic

National University
of Natural Medicine
Community Clinics

Neighborhood
Health Center

North by Northeast
Community Health
Center

OHSU Family
Medicine at
Richmond

Central City
Concern/

Oregon College of
Oriental Medicine

Outside In

PACS Family
Health Clinic

Planned
Parenthood
Columbia
Willamette

Prism Health

Rosewood Family
Health Center

Wallace

Hello, Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chair Anderson, and members of the committee:

My name is Keara Rodela. I am the Health Equity & Community Partnership Director with the Coalition of Community Health Clinics, a community health worker born and raised in Portland, OR and submitting this written testimony in **support of Senate Bill 702.**

As a public health professional who loves her family and community, it hurts to know that **commercial tobacco and nicotine use is the number-one cause of preventable death and disease in Oregon. Specifically heart disease, lung diseases, and strokes.** And that flavored tobacco products and nicotine products make it easier to start smoking and harder to quit.

And this is all by design.

It's known that the tobacco industry creates products full of highly addictive nicotine and cancer-causing chemicals. And when you market those substances with names like cool mint, blue razz ice, and watermelon bubblegum, when you package them in bright, colorful devices that fit in the palm of a hand, then you are intentionally trying to attract and hook youth on this product. **Almost all adult smokers say they started before age 21.** Here in Oregon, **e-cigarettes and vapes are the most popular tobacco products among our youth, with 75% of them using flavored tobacco or vaping products.** Personally, I see youth in my neighborhood vaping on the sidewalks, and my own teenagers complain about walking through fruity clouds of smoke from vapes to use the bathrooms at school.



And it's all by design.

Menthol was the first flavored tobacco product created and used to make cigarettes taste smoother and reduce their harshness. It was the flavor of choice for my uncles. See, my uncles started smoking as teens. I remember as a kid, the sound of their coughs as they stood on the front porch in a circle, smoking at our family gatherings. It felt like they couldn't go an hour without stepping outside for a smoke. As an adult, I can still picture my oldest uncle struggling to breathe in his hospice bed, his chest swollen with fluid, as he lay dying from COPD.

And it's all by design.

As a community health worker, we see the predatory practices and targeting of our communities by the tobacco industry and how it affects our most vulnerable community members, especially our youth. We've organized in our counties, and we're doing our part to try and protect our families and yours. But we need your help. Our youth, families, and communities deserve to live healthy lives. You can contribute to that. Help end the sale of flavored tobacco and nicotine products here in Oregon by passing SB 702.

Sincerely,

Keara Rodela, MPH, CHW

Health Equity & Community Partnership Director

Coalition of Community Health Clinics

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