



Testimony in Support of the TMSA Campaign's Budget Proposal

May 6, 2013

House Committee on Human Services and Housing

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Oregon Nurses Association

Chair Tomei and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement (TMSA) Campaign's budget proposal on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association.

ONA is Oregon's oldest and largest nursing union and professional association, and is proud to represent over 13,000 registered nurses, advanced practice nurses, and nursing students in Oregon. Oregon Nurses make up the largest segment of Oregon's health care work force, and work in nearly every health care setting; from large hospitals to small local clinics, from corrections to school-based health centers, and community-based public health settings.

ONA and other members of the public health community have proposed a spending package for the TMSA funds that focuses on tobacco prevention, tobacco cessation, and improving public health for all Oregonians. We appreciate your interest in furthering this important conversation. While the decision to use tobacco is a personal health choice, it carries a huge public cost each year. In 2009, Oregon's Medicaid cost for treating smoking-related illnesses and diseases was \$290 million. These costs can be significantly decreased by a reduction in tobacco use, if prevention and cessation programs are able to reach those who want help.

The TMSA dollars were intended to support public health through the implementation of tobacco cessation and prevention programs that concentrated on youth education and programs that prevent kids from starting to smoke, and the TMSA Campaign's proposal focuses on that intent.

ONA is part of the TMSA Campaign because nurses understand the value and importance of tobacco prevention and cessation. Children who develop healthy lifestyles and habits at a young age are far more likely to lead healthy lives as adults. Physical education at school is an important way to promote healthy behavior in our children and helps reduce the incidence of chronic illnesses among youth. In conjunction with school-based health centers, physical education can play an important role in helping to create a well-rounded, healthy environment for young Oregonians at school.

Investing the TMSA dollars in the campaign's proposal will help fulfill the original intent of the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement and will help ensure young Oregonians are developing habits that will help shape them into healthy and productive adults, and help them avoid chronic illness and unhealthy behaviors like smoking.

Please honor the intent of the Tobacco Master Settlement by supporting the TMSA Campaign's proposal and invest the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement in Physical Education, School-Based Health Centers, Oregon's CCO's, Oregon's Transformation Center, and Oregon's Tobacco Prevention and Education Program.

Thank you.