



Benton County Health Department

530 NW 27th Street
P.O. Box 579
Corvallis, OR 97339-0579

Main Line: 541-766-6835 • Administration FAX: 541-766-6142 • Medical Records FAX: 541-766-6186
Developmental Disabilities: 541-766-6847 • Environmental Health: 541-766-6841 • New Beginnings: 541-766-3450
Telecommunications Relay Service: TTY 1-800-735-2900 • Website: www.co.benton.or.us/health

Person-Centered Behavioral & Physical Health Care Public Health & Prevention Regulatory and Population Health Health Management Services

May 6, 2013

House Human Services and Housing Committee

Good Afternoon Chair Tomei, Vice-Chairs Olson and Gomberg and Members of the House Human Services and Housing Committee:

My name is Sara Hartstein and I am the Benton County Tobacco Prevention Program Coordinator. I am here to talk about our local work as part of Oregon's comprehensive Tobacco Prevention and Education Program. This afternoon I would like to talk about the plight of tobacco use in my community and what the Benton County Health Department is doing to prevent youth from smoking, support adults who are trying to quit, and protect non-smokers from exposure to secondhand smoke.

Tobacco use inflicts a tremendous toll on the people who live in my county. In one year, 7,456 adults regularly smoke cigarettes and 1,769 people suffer from a serious illness caused by tobacco use. Eighteen percent of all deaths in Benton County are due to tobacco use, even though we have among the lowest tobacco use rates in Oregon. Each year in Benton County we also spend \$17 million on medical care for tobacco-related illnesses and it is estimated \$15 million is lost in productivity due to tobacco-related deaths. I share these statistics with you as a reminder that tobacco-use is still an issue that needs attention in our local communities.

That being said, tobacco use rates in Oregon have declined due in large part to Oregon's evidenced-based Tobacco Prevention and Education Program efforts at the state and local level. Public health research shows that well-funded community prevention programs, like the Tobacco Prevention and Education Program, will continue to be important in order to further decrease tobacco use rates. This is especially effective in concert with a fully transformed health care system, which focuses on saving lives and costs through prevention.

Through the Tobacco Prevention and Education Program, all county health departments in Oregon receive funding for local tobacco prevention efforts. Funding for the Tobacco Prevention and Education Program comes from the Tobacco Use Reduction Account. The Tobacco Use Reduction Account receives three cents of the \$1.18 collected in cigarette taxes and 4.62 percent of other tobacco taxes (including cigars). These funds are essential for ensuring that there are community efforts in tobacco prevention across Oregon – from Portland to Klamath Falls and from Newport to Albany to Ontario.

The Tobacco Prevention and Education Program has been particularly impactful in my county. In Benton County there have been many examples of local work that protects residents from secondhand smoke and prevents youth from smoking. One significant example, due in part to health department staffing provided through TPEP funds, occurred when the City of Corvallis was the first in Oregon to pass a comprehensive smokefree workplace ordinance in 1997, twelve years before the state law took effect (2009 Indoor Clean Air Act). In 2005, Corvallis implemented smokefree parks. More recently, staff worked with the Benton County Board of Commissioners to develop and implement a tobacco-free government property policy that includes parks, natural areas and the fairgrounds. Staff also assisted Samaritan Health Services and Oregon State University as they developed and implemented their

"Healthy People in a Healthy Community"

tobacco-free property policies designed to reduce secondhand smoke exposure and tobacco use prevalence. While working closely with Linn-Benton Housing Authority we established a no smoking rule for 192 rental housing units which protects children from smoke exposure and creates an environment where people are not smoking in the home.

In addition to policy work, in Benton County we partner with local law enforcement, retailers, and our Substance Abuse Prevention Program to train alcohol and tobacco retailers on the current no sales to minors laws and provide them with the skills they need to comply. Ensuring minors do not have access to tobacco is another way to prevent youth from smoking.

I would like to share a couple of success stories from other communities, as well. Currently, local TPEP programs focus on smokefree policies in housing, colleges and universities, and parks. As I have already mentioned, these policies protect residents from secondhand smoke, support adults who are trying to quit, and help prevent youth from smoking.

- Coos County worked with Southwestern Oregon Community College to implement a no smoking campus policy (except in designated areas).
- Deschutes County implemented a tobacco-free policy on all county properties, including the fairgrounds.
- Linn County worked with the City of Lebanon to pass a smokefree parks policy.
- Washington County worked with multi-unit housing providers to adopt no smoking rules. This has resulted in 75 percent of the multi-unit housing stock in Washington County going smokefree.
- Union County has been working with Eastern Oregon University and Grande Ronde Hospital, and they have both announced they are going smokefree in 2013.

There are many more examples like these from across the state. Smokefree and tobacco-free policies are one of the most effective strategies to protect people from secondhand smoke, and have been found to reduce both smoking prevalence and the amount of cigarettes that an individual smokes per day. A smokefree environment also alters the perceived norms related to smoking by changing attitudes concerning the social acceptability of smoking.

Thank you for your time, and for allowing me to provide the Committee with this informational testimony.



Sara Hartstein

Tobacco Prevention Program Coordinator