



TO: Senate Judiciary Committee

FROM: Tomasz M. Beer, M.D. Deputy Director  
Oregon Health & Science University  
Knight Cancer Institute

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SUBJECT: Written Testimony in Support of SB 444

Mail code L101  
3181 SW Sam Jackson Park  
Portland, OR 97239-3098  
tel 503 494-6629  
fax 503 494-7778  
[www.ohsu.edu](http://www.ohsu.edu)

Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

Oregon Health & Science University supports Senate Bill 444, which prohibits smoking in cars where minors are present.

It is clear that exposing children to second hand tobacco smoke causes serious health risks. There is no safe level of exposure and we must do all we can to protect Oregon's children from the hazards of second hand smoke (SHS).

In 2006, the Surgeon General's report concludes that children exposed to SHS, "are at an increased risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), acute respiratory infections, ear problems, and more severe asthma. Smoking by parents causes respiratory symptoms and slows lung growth in their children." SHS can cause asthma in children who have not previously shown any symptoms. In addition, children who have asthma feel worse symptoms and have an increased number of attacks.

Startlingly, second hand smoke in motor vehicles can be up to 27 times more concentrated than in a smoker's home. By the time it takes a person to smoke half a cigarette, the air quality in a parked car can reach up to 10 times the hazardous level on the EPA's Air Quality Index. It doesn't matter if the car is moving or parked, the windows are opened or cracked, the air quality level remains in the hazardous zone.

Oregon and 16 other states already ban smoking in cars transporting foster children. Four States – Alaska, California, Louisiana and Maine – plus Puerto Rico and Guam have already passed legislation protecting minors from second hand smoke in motor vehicles.

Early indications are that these laws work. The California Department of Public Health found that one-year after the new state law was implemented the number of children who reported being in a car with someone smoking cigarettes in the past 7 days dropped by 13%. SB 444 is an important step in protection Oregon's children from the negative, sometimes lifelong impacts of second hand smoke.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important legislation and I encourage your support for Senate Bill 444.