

Testimony to the House Revenue Committee on behalf of the Oregon Chapter of the American College of Cardiology on March 12, 2013.

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Mr. Chairman, members, I appreciate the opportunity to represent the Oregon Chapter of the American College of Cardiology (ACC), which is a professional society of nearly 200 cardiologists and cardiac surgeons in Oregon, as well as many nurse practitioners, physician assistants and nurses who care for the heart health of Oregonians. We strongly urge you to pass HB2275, as you can see in the letter from our members. I am a practicing cardiologist at OHSU, where I did my post-medical school clinical training starting in 1998. Prior to that I received a masters in public health degree from the University of Michigan and a medical degree from the University of Wisconsin. At Wisconsin I spent time working at Michael Fiore's Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention, one of the nation's leading centers for tobacco-related public policy and for the development of methods to prevent and treat tobacco addiction.

Oregon ACC strongly supports this bill. I recognize I'm not the first person to tell you that smoking is bad. Most people realize that smoking is unique in its combination of addictiveness and powerfully negative health effects. Smoking causes more than a quarter of deaths due to cancer and heart disease and is the major cause of COPD (also called emphysema). Smoking contributes to many other negative health effects as well.

Rather than list statistics I'd like to briefly talk about a couple of stories. My wife is also a cardiologist and we were just lamenting how we are seeing patients coming in with heart attacks who are younger than us. Not surprisingly, the common theme is that they smoke cigarettes and started at a young age. One young man who is 38 years old was living a great life with a great job when he started having chest pain. He came to the hospital where we did an angiogram and found that he needed urgent 4 vessel heart bypass surgery. He had started smoking when he was 13. Another patient, who just came in last week had a completely blocked left anterior descending artery ("the widow-maker") and underwent emergency stent placement. He started smoking when he was 15. I called my children's pediatrician to see if she had any stories about kids smoking. She told me about a 13 year old in her practice who smokes a pack of cigarettes per

day and started when he was 11. That child is already hooked and has a lifetime of health problems ahead of him.

Here is the main statistic I think people really need to know for this debate: **90% of all people who start smoking start the habit before they are 18 years old and every 10% increase in the price of cigarettes lowers the rate of teen smoking by 7%.**

Therefore this bill would decrease the number of people who become addicted to tobacco by more than 20%, as well as encourage current smokers to quit.

This bill uses an effective, targeted and proven way to decrease tobacco addiction and in so doing lower health care costs. If I could make a couple of personal observations, I am very understanding of people who feel strongly that the government is too big and too meddlesome. I am not here because I want to tell adults how to lead their lives or to help anyone raise taxes. I am here to encourage you to vote for a bill that that is the most effective way to keep children from becoming addicted. It does so with the least complexity, least cost and least administrative burden of any tobacco regulation. Most young children do not have a lot of spending money. Even if they are tempted to buy their first pack of cigarettes (often from an older friend), a high price for those cigarettes becomes a big deterrent for them. If compromises are essential to get this bill passed, then I would encourage them. I'm not a politician but would imagine that if there is strong opposition based on the idea of a new tax you could be creative and give some or all of the revenue back. If voters are annoyed by the idea of a "nanny state" or a "sin tax" you could rebate the tax at the end of the year to all adult smokers who saved their cigarette receipts (like I do for my health flex account). **Preventing kids from becoming addicted to cigarettes is a bipartisan issue.** If it is painted in any other way I enthusiastically offer my time to any representatives who feel I could be of help in reframing the debate. If there is only one tobacco-related bill you vote "yes" for in your entire career, this should be the one.

Committee members, cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death among Oregon men and women. Everyone in this room will have a close friend or family member who develops heart disease. This legislation provides a strong and efficient method for reducing cardiovascular mortality among current and future Oregonians. I strongly encourage your support of HB2275.