

OREGON MEDICAL ASSOCIATION



**Testimony Before the
House Committee on Revenue regarding HB 2275
Presented by Dr. William Pierce
on behalf of the Oregon Medical Association
March 12, 2013**

Chair Barnhart, Vice-Chair Bailey, Vice-Chair Berger, members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Dr. William C ‘Bud’ Pierce, and I am the President of the Oregon Medical Association. I am a medical oncologist and I have practiced in Salem for the past 19 years.

I am pleased to testify today in support of HB 2275.

Oregon’s current cigarette tax rate ranks 29th in the nation at \$1.18 per pack. Cigarette taxes range from a low of \$0.30 in Virginia to \$4.35 in New York. Tobacco accounts for approximately 22.2 percent of all Oregon deaths and costs Oregonian’s nearly \$2.4B in direct medical expenditures as well as indirect costs of lost productivity due to premature death¹. A recent report by the American Lung Association estimates that smoking-caused healthcare costs and productivity losses in Oregon total at least \$18.83 per pack, using 2009 dollars and 2009 pack sales.

Increasing the tobacco tax has been shown to be an effective means to reduce tobacco consumption, especially for youth. Oregon last raised the tobacco tax in 1996. Between 1996 and 2009, Oregon saw a 26 percent reduction in adult smoking and a 54 percent decrease in smoking among 8th graders. Despite these gains, the teen smoking rate is increasing- 16 percent of high school students have recently taken up smoking and the adult rate has been steady since 2009.

Tobacco related deaths generally occur from one of three underlying causes: cancers, cardiovascular diseases and respiratory diseases. As an oncologist, I’ve seen the deadly impacts of smoking throughout my career and am in support of any measure that would reduce the harmful effects of smoking, especially in today’s youth.

I would like to thank you once again for the opportunity to address the committee regarding this very important topic and I’m happy to answer any questions.

¹ Tobacco Prevention and Education Program. Oregon Tobacco Facts & Laws. Portland, Oregon: Oregon Department of Human Services, Oregon Public Health Division, 2010.