



Association of Oregon  
Community Mental Health Programs



February 5, 2014

Testimony before the House Committee On Human Services and Housing

HB 4115, Electronic Smoking Devices

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

My name is Sara Hartstein and I am the Benton County Health Policy Specialist. I am here to testify on behalf of the Coalition of Local Health Officials, the Association of Oregon Counties and the Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs.

The Coalition of Local Health Officials represents all 34 local health departments in Oregon. Oregon's Local Health Departments are charged with protecting the public's health and preventing the spread of disease in local communities throughout Oregon. The Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP) represents County-based Community Mental Health Programs and County Health and Human Services departments. County Boards of Commissioners serve as the Local Public Health and Local Mental Health Authorities responsible for the health of their communities.

The Coalition of Local Health Officials, the Association of Oregon Counties and the Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs strongly urge you to support HB 4115 with the - 5 amendments; banning the sale of electronic smoking devices and solutions containing *any* substance to minors; and prohibiting the use of electronic smoking devices where conventional smoking is currently prohibited by the Oregon Indoor Clean Air Act.

Tobacco is still the leading cause of preventable death in Oregon, accounts for over 6,900 Oregonian lives each year and costs the state more than \$2 billion a year. Electronic smoking devices, or e-cigarettes, bring up new concerns for health professionals.

E-cigarettes are battery-powered devices that mimic the act of smoking while inhaling a vaporized solution consisting of nicotine, flavor additives and other chemicals and substances. The risks posed by e-cigarettes are not fully understood and much more research is needed; however, what we do know is that smokeless does not necessarily mean harmless.

E-cigarettes are currently unregulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) which means that e-cigarettes manufactured on the same production line can be very different from each other - even if they are labeled as the same product. This means that nicotine levels and chemicals can vary so much it is difficult to know what is in an e-cigarette when purchased.

The FDA analyzed samples of e-cigarettes and found that they contained nicotine even though they were labeled as “nicotine-free.” The FDA also found that samples of e-cigarettes contained chemicals known to cause cancer and birth defects in the vapor that is inhaled and released into the atmosphere (i.e., first and secondhand vapor).

E-cigarettes are also used as a delivery device for other drugs. For example, hash oil is now commercially available for use in e-cigarettes in Washington and Colorado.

The use of e-cigarettes by youth is on the rise, potentially creating new addictions to nicotine among Oregon’s children. E-cigarettes may be particularly appealing to youth due to their high-tech design, the wide array of available candy and fruit flavors, marketing strategies, and lack of a minimum age for purchase of the product.

From 2011 to 2012, CDC data showed that e-cigarette use doubled among U.S. middle and high school students. This is concerning since data shows that 1 in 5 high school students who use e-cigarettes do not smoke conventional cigarettes and are potentially beginning a lifelong addiction to nicotine. Remember, it is estimated that 90 percent of all smokers began their nicotine addiction as teenagers.

E-cigarette use among adults is increasing as well; in fact, additional CDC data showed that the number of adults in America who use e-cigarettes quadrupled from 2009 to 2010. Some smokers use e-cigarettes as a way to quit smoking; however, there is no conclusive evidence that e-cigarettes promote long-time cessation. The concern is that e-cigarettes are deepening the addiction among current smokers - especially since they are marketed as a product to maintain nicotine addiction in smoke-free areas - and renewing addiction among former smokers. According to the Legacy Foundation, 7.2 percent of smokers who quit tobacco returned to nicotine addiction via e-cigarettes in 2012.

HB 4115 as amended would:

- Prohibit the sale of electronic smoking devices to minors;
- Prohibit the sales of any solution designed to be used in an electronic smoking device to minors, *no matter what the content*; and
- Prohibit use of electronic smoking devices, *no matter what the content*, where conventional smoking is prohibited by the Oregon Indoor Clean Air Act.

The Coalition of Local Health Officials, the Association of Oregon Counties and the Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs urge your support of this important bill.

Thank you,

Sara Hartstein  
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