



MEMORANDUM

To: Senator Monnes-Anderson, Chair, Senate Committee on Health Care
Senator Kruse, Co-chair, Senate Committee on Health Care
Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care

From: Courtni Dresser, OMA Government Affairs

Date: March 23, 2015

Re: Support for HB 2546-A

HB 2546 A effectively expands existing state tobacco laws to encompass inhalant delivery systems, thereby prohibiting the sale and use of these systems by minors and adds these delivery systems to the Clean Indoor Act, ensuring that worksites and public places are afforded the same protection from these systems as from traditional tobacco products. As a member of the interim workgroup that drafted this legislation, the OMA applauds the work of this group to reach consensus on a broad definition that applies to “electronic cigarettes” and “vapor products” and subjects these inhalant delivery systems to the same laws as tobacco products.

The primary public health goal of the OMA is to reduce illness, disability, and deaths related to tobacco use and second hand smoke exposure. Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of disease and death in the US. OMA physicians and physician assistants support any effort made to restrict e-cigarette access by youth, given the potential of these devices to act as a gateway drug to traditional tobacco products. E-cigarette marketing strategies have already successfully convinced youth that this vaporized form of smoking is “harmless” and because they are smokeless, socially acceptable. Youth are not getting the message that e-cigarettes are non-flammable nicotine delivery devices that contain either synthetic nicotine or extracts of tobacco. OMA members remain very concerned about the lack of FDA-approval for these devices as well as what is being put in the cartridges used in e-cigarettes; an e-cigarette still requires the youth to inhale the contents of the cartridge, which is then ingested into the respiratory system of the minor. The contents of these cartridges, especially when nicotine or other addictive substances are added, are enticing a new generation of smokers who will face the same illnesses, disabilities and deaths as those using traditional tobacco products.

The OMA further supports the addition of inhalant delivery systems to the Clean Indoor Act as e-cigarettes do release a vapor that can be irritating and is noticeable to both the smoker and non-smoker alike. The effects of e-cigarette vapor are not yet fully known, however, initial studies have shown disturbing results, including a recent finding by PSU that the vapor in e-cigarettes contains formaldehyde. The formaldehyde was detected in the vaped e-cigarette aerosol particles that are

breathed in by both the smoker and non-smoker in the vicinity of the vapor (results published in JAMA 372:392-394 on January 22, 2015). Aligning inhalant delivery systems under the Clean Indoor Act protects the health of the public from any remaining vapors and demonstrates the continuing commitment of the state to reduce Oregon's smoking rate- for both adults and our youth.

The OMA encourages your support of HB 2546-A and encourages the committee to pass the bill without further amendment.

The Oregon Medical Association is an organization of over 8,100 physicians, physician assistants, and medical students organized to serve and support physicians in their efforts to improve the health of Oregonians. Additional information can be found at www.theOMA.org.