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Testimony Supporting SB 417

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Senator Beyer and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of SB 417 on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association. Oregon Nurses make up the largest segment of Oregon's health care work force, working in nearly every health care setting imaginable, from large hospitals to small local clinics, from corrections to school based health centers, and community-based public health.

Oregon's nurses have long been active in Oregon's tobacco and nicotine prevention and cessation efforts. As direct care providers, nurses see firsthand the damages caused by smoking, and are faced with caring for many Oregonians who are suffering chronic illness as a result to tobacco use. Tobacco use is widely known to cause heart disease, diabetes, asthma, and cancer. In fact, one in five deaths are tobacco related—more than any other leading cause of death. Additionally, tobacco use is costly to the state, resulting in over \$1.5 billion a year in Oregon in medical cost, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Although Oregon's nurses and other health care providers have demonstrated that they are committed to stressing the importance of smoking cessation, the most important work we can do around this issue is preventing non-tobacco and non-nicotine users from ever taking up these lifelong, dangerous habits, especially our children.

Recognizing that most tobacco and nicotine users become addicted at a young age, ONA supports a variety of tobacco and nicotine prevention policies specifically aimed at creating barriers to access, making tobacco and nicotine products less affordable, and eliminating marketing and flavors geared at youth. A strong tobacco and nicotine licensure policy, like the one crafted in SB 417, is vital to ensuring compliance with state tobacco and nicotine restrictions. Like with Oregon's alcohol sales, SB 417 rests on the simple concept that retailers selling tobacco products must comply with all relevant laws or risk losing the privilege of selling these products.

The vast majority of states currently use some sort of tobacco retail licensure policy as an enforcement tool. Without this tool, Oregon consistently leads the nation with high illegal sales rates of tobacco to minors, and topped the list in 2013 as the worst state. Without a retail licensure structure in place, point of sale and tobacco tax policies are incredibly difficult to enforce and allow young Oregonians greater access to tobacco and nicotine products.

SB 417 includes Inhalant Delivery System Devices (IDSD) or e-cigarettes. ONA sees this inclusion as vital. Contrary to popular opinion e-cigarettes are not a healthy alternative to smoking traditional tobacco. Analyses of e-cigarette samples found known carcinogens, and detectable levels of other toxic chemicals in first and second hand aerosol particles; including chemicals that are known to cause cancer and birth defects.

The World Health Organization recommends regulating e-cigarettes the same way traditional tobacco is regulated. ONA supports policies that align with this recommendation and we are working to include IDSD in all tobacco regulations. Non-traditional tobacco products, like hookah and e-cigarettes, are increasingly attractive to youth. This popularity can be attributed in part to social acceptability and the perception that



these non-traditional tobacco and nicotine products do not have detrimental health impacts. People who utilize these non-traditional tobacco and nicotine products are at risk of transitioning to traditional smoking tobacco.

In Oregon an estimated 5,500 adults die from cigarette smoking every year, according to the United States Health and Human Services (HHS) report submitted for the record today. Furthermore, 68,300 Oregon youth that are currently younger than 18 years of age are projected to die early from tobacco use if the status quo remains unchanged.

Tobacco retail licensure is an important mechanism to ensure responsible retailing and compliance with important public health laws.

ONA urges your support of SB 417.