



THE COALITION OF LOCAL HEALTH OFFICIALS

House Health Care Committee
February 3, 2016
CLHO Supports HB 4062

The Coalition of Local Health Officials (CLHO) represents the 34 Local Health Departments in Oregon who work to protect the public's health. The Coalition of Local Health Officials supports HB 4062, which would tax electronic cigarettes ("e-cigarettes") to treat e-cigarettes like a tobacco product.

Nationally, e-cigarette use has surpassed all other tobacco products among middle and high school students. And since 2013, electronic cigarette use among Oregon high school students has tripled.ⁱ This is made even more alarming by the fact that youth who use e-cigarettes are considerably more likely to start smoking traditional cigarettes within a year compared to their peers who do not smoke e-cigarettes. The progress we have made in reducing youth cigarette smoking rates is being threatened.

We know this product is not currently approved by the Food and Drug Administrative as a cessation device. In addition, multiple studies have not shown e-cigarettes to be effective tobacco cessation products. And recent study found that e-cigarettes expose users to significant amounts of cancer-causing gases including formaldehyde and acetaldehyde.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends several strategies for reducing tobacco and e-cigarette use among youth, these strategies include funding tobacco control programs at CDC-recommended levels, increasing prices of tobacco products, implementing and enforcing comprehensive smoke-free laws, and sustaining hard-hitting media campaigns.

Last legislative session we took the first steps in preventing youth from using these products and now we need to take the next step by taxing these products. Increasing the price of e-cigarettes is effective in decreasing initiation of new users. This is especially true among youth—the most price-sensitive consumers.

We urge you to support HB 4062 to help deter youth from getting addicted to nicotine.

Respectfully submitted,

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ⁱ Oregon Healthy Teens Survey, 2015.