



**Testimony in Support of HB 3178
Larlene Dunsmuir, DNP, FNP, APN-C
March 20, 2017**

Chair Barnhart and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 3178. HB 3178 creates a tax for electronic cigarettes in Oregon, which will help prevent young Oregonians from becoming addicted to nicotine. ONA nurses have long advocated for evidence based policies to prevent youth from taking up tobacco and nicotine products. With the exception of FDA approved cessation devices, e-cigarettes are currently the only form of nicotine available in Oregon without a tax, making the product more available for young, price-sensitive Oregonians. Raising the price is the most effective intervention available.¹

As a Family Nurse Practitioner, I join ONA in strongly supporting the World Health Organization's recommendation to regulate e-cigarettes the same way traditional cigarettes and other tobacco products are regulated. This includes a robust tax to dissuade youth use and strong discouragement of any comparative health statements.² ***As a health care provider, statements of unsubstantiated, comparative health effects are especially concerning to me.*** E-cigarettes are a relatively new product and we do not have longitudinal research findings to support their safe use, especially in youth.³

E-cigarettes work by heating up a fluid that contains the drug nicotine and various other ingredients, producing a vapor that users inhale. Due to lagging federal action, in Oregon e-cigarettes are unregulated beyond the restrictions this legislature has put in place to prohibit sales to minors and include vaping in Oregon's robust Indoor Clean Air Act—both steps ONA worked hard to help achieve. Absent stronger regulation, there is no consistency in vaping liquids. Beyond nicotine, the chemicals and products that make up the vaping liquid can and do vary greatly. These additional ingredients also have the potential of carrying serious health risks, depending on the concoction.

While I acknowledge the risks of developing cancer from e-cigarette use is less than with combustible products, cancer is not the only health concern associated with e-cigarettes. I have significant concern about the long-term risks of e-cigarette use, especially considering the fact that nicotine is absorbed more readily through vaping. Even studies that support vaping as a smoking cessation device recognize the addictive nature of nicotine and strongly encourage implementation of policies to prevent youth access and use—like a robust tax.⁴

According to a recent study in the New England Journal of Medicine, one third of *young* e-cigarette users have never smoked tobacco prior to vaping.⁵ Similarly, a 2015 study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found e-cigarettes to be most popular among young adults, ages 18 to 24—nearly 22 percent of adults who reported ever trying an e-cigarette fell into that age group.⁶

The appeal of e-cigarettes to young people has raised reasonable fears that the devices may hook a new generation on nicotine and lead them to eventually start smoking tobacco. Among the nonsmokers in the CDC study, nearly 10 percent of the people in the young age group had tried e-cigarettes.

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, The Health Consequences of Smoking: 50 Years of Progress. A Report of the Surgeon General, 2014.

² World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems and Electronic Non-Nicotine Delivery Systems, August 2016

³ Dinakar, C. & O'Conner, G. T., The Health Effects of Electronic Cigarettes. The New England Journal of Medicine, 2016.

⁴ Dinakar, C. & O'Conner, G. T., The Health Effects of Electronic Cigarettes. The New England Journal of Medicine, 2016.

⁵ Dinakar, C. & O'Conner, G. T., The Health Effects of Electronic Cigarettes. The New England Journal of Medicine, 2016.

⁶ Schoenborn C & Gindi, R., Electronic Cigarette Use Among Adults: United States, 2014. NCHS Data Brief October 2015.

Young adults who have never smoked traditional cigarettes are picking up electronic cigarettes at a disturbing rate. The Oregon Health Authority found that non-cigarette tobacco use is 80% higher than traditional cigarette use for 11th graders⁷ and youths who use electronic cigarettes are almost twice as likely to have intentions to smoke conventional cigarettes when compared with those who had never used electronic cigarettes.⁸

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, e-cigarettes are now the most commonly used tobacco product among youth, surpassing conventional cigarettes in 2014, and the use of e-cigarettes is strongly associated with the use of other tobacco products among youth.⁹ Given these disturbing trends and the known risks of nicotine addiction, I strongly urge your support of HB 3178.

⁷ OHA Tobacco Fact Sheet 2014

⁸ National Youth Tobacco Survey. 2013. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

⁹ US Department of Health and Human Services, E-cigarette use among youth and young adults. Report of the Surgeon General, 2016.