



Permanente Dental Associates

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April 24, 2017

Rep. Merwyn R. Greenlick, Chair
Oregon House Health Care Committee

RE: Permanente Dental Associates Support for SB 754

Dear Chair Greenlick and members of the House Health Care Committee,

I am writing to voice my very strong support for Senate Bill 754, which will raise the minimum legal age at which a person may purchase tobacco products or inhalant delivery systems from 18 to 21. The Oral Cancer Foundation promotes April as Oral Cancer Awareness Month, so the timing of this bill dovetails nicely with national oral cancer advocacy efforts. Oral cancer can literally wipe the smile off your face, and we are proud to support SB 754's passage in Oregon.

Oral cancers are the sixth most common type of cancers in the world, and account for 3% of the cancers diagnosed in the United States each year. The National Institutes of Health estimates that approximately 37,000 new oral cancer cases are diagnosed in the United States annually, and over 8,000 Americans will die from the disease each year. In at least 75% of oral cancer cases, the use of tobacco is a contributing factor. When tobacco and alcohol use are combined, the risk of oral cancer is *15 times more* than non-users of tobacco and alcohol products. One study at UC San Francisco found that greater than eight out of ten oral cancer patients were smokers. Education, counseling and treatment are the best weapons we have to limit the lifestyle factors – like tobacco use – that lead to oral cancers. Raising the legal purchasing age to 21 will help to limit the future smokers who will inevitably become future oral cancer patients.

Since 1974 Permanente Dental Associates, PC ("PDA") has been giving our Pacific Northwest neighbors something to smile about with dental care that connects seamlessly to their overall health and wellness plans. Tobacco-cessation counseling is just a small part of our integrated approach to education, oral health and wellness. But cessation counseling would be unnecessary if we could help prevent Oregonians from beginning tobacco use in the first place.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel J. Pihlstrom".

Daniel J. Pihlstrom, DDS
Associate Director for Evidence Based Care & Oral Health Research