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To the Oregon legislature;

My name is Brandy Carpenter. I am currently a nurse practitioner and a trained tobacco treatment specialist (TTS) that is the sole provider for the Legacy health system's Lung Cancer Screening program. I am a resident of Beaverton, Oregon. I am writing in support of increasing the tax on tobacco and vaping system in the state of Oregon.

I am the loved one of deceased parents whom both died from stage 4 lung cancer which I am certain their tobacco use directly contributed to. They both were smokers that started in adolescence. I watched my father suffocate to death as his cancer ravaged his body in 1999. I watched this strong, US Army wartime veteran of 180 pounds waste away to less than 120 pounds and not be able to walk more than 2-3 steps without feeling as if he suffocated. I remember 15-year-old me being scared and angry that tobacco caused his demise. It helped discourage my use, and I am grateful for that one positive to come out of such tragedy of losing my father.

Fifteen years later, I was unfortunate enough to watch the same scenario play out with my mother. She understood the risks and health consequences of using tobacco, as well as had lived through the life experience of watching the love of her life succumb to lung cancer, yet she could not free herself from the addiction. The addiction was too strong. I watched her collapse her lung and require a chest tube to keep her lung expanded. I watched her waste away like my father to less than 75 pounds. I watched her struggle to breathe and be uncomfortable even with the best of hospice care in her last days. I watched her suffer a painful death that resulted from her decades of tobacco use.

Tobacco stole both of my parents from me. My daughter will never have the pleasure of meeting her grandparents. I have lost my best friend in my mother to the health consequences of tobacco use. Despite all my efforts, I could not help her alone free herself from addiction. This is what drove me to eventually work in pulmonary medicine and lung cancer screening as I wanted to be part of the solution to the current nicotine dependence epidemic.

As the sole provider for the lung cancer screening program at Legacy Health, I see daily the health consequences of smoking. I see over 1,000 patients annually in the lung cancer screening program. These patients all have at least a 30-pack year history of smoking, so quite extensive smoking histories. Within this population, when performing annual lung cancer screening on these asymptomatic patients, we find a clinically active cancer between 2-3% of the time. Half of the patients whom are screened in the lung cancer screening program here at Legacy are current smokers. Majority of my patients in the screening program are experiencing the tobacco disease burden and health consequences of their decades of smoking.

While it's great that we have developed a lung cancer screening program that is saving lives through early detection, this is just secondary prevention. Besides screening for lung cancer through use of low-dose CT, the majority of programs for lung cancer screening nationwide also provide one-on-one counseling to current smokers about their nicotine addiction and help those preparing to quit to set a quit plan and a quit date. But again, just like lung cancer screening, tobacco cessation counseling is secondary prevention, and the need for more efforts state and nationwide on primary prevention of smoking should be of utmost importance.

I believe the state of Oregon needs to strive towards more primary prevention. This primary prevention of the health consequences of smoking should be aimed at preventing adolescents and adults from initiation of use of tobacco and e-cigarette products. Oregon already has started implementing primary prevention solutions such as raising the age to purchase tobacco to 21 years of age. Increasing the tax on tobacco and e-cigarette vaping products will further Oregon's efforts in primary prevention. We know that a 10 percent increase in cigarette prices cuts consumption by up to four percent in adults, and by even more for youth (6-8%).

I support implementing a tax on tobacco and e-cigarette products. I am hopeful it will discourage more adolescents and adults from ever starting, and hopefully motivate those already suffering from nicotine addiction and tobacco disease burden to finally take control and become free from nicotine dependence. The tax should become part of a broader approach to helping end nicotine dependence and I am hopeful the state of Oregon will partner with providers like myself who are on the front lines of fighting this addiction through increased taxation of tobacco and e-cigarette products.

Respectfully,



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