



To: Rep. Nancy Nathanson, Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Tax Expenditures
Sen. Mark Hass, Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Tax Expenditures
Members of the Joint Committee on Tax Expenditures

From: James Lace, MD, Chair, OMA's Legislative Committee

Date: June 17, 2019

Re: HB 2270 A

A primary public health goal of the OMA is to reduce illness, disability, and deaths related to tobacco use and second hand smoke exposure and we believe HB 2270 A is an important step to realizing that goal.

Smoking is the number one cause of preventable death in Oregon and physicians see first-hand the dangerous and debilitating effects tobacco use has on their patients. Physicians counsel and educate them about the negative health impacts of tobacco and e-cigarette use and support their patients with tools for cessation, yet tobacco companies have targeted communities of color, Native American tribes, low-income and LGBTQ communities for decades through advertising and now youth are being targeted as e-cigarette consumers, forming the next generation of smokers. Since 2017 the number of middle schoolers who indicate they have tried e-cigarettes has increased by 48%. As a pediatrician, this is particularly troublesome.

Currently, 9% of all spending in the Oregon Health Plan is directly related to smoking-related illness, which equates to roughly \$374 million dollars per year. We know that raising the prices of tobacco and nicotine products is the single most effective strategy to reducing use; a 10% increase in price will lead to a 4% decrease in use among adults and a 7% decrease in youth consumption.

HB 2270 A will provide funds to the Oregon Health Plan, help stabilize long-term health insurance costs and support smoking cessation and prevention programs. A \$2 per pack increase on cigarettes and the first ever e-cigarette tax will provide \$346 million dollars per biennia to the Oregon Health Plan. It will also provide meaningful investments in community and culturally specific programs to increase prevention and cessation efforts.

Studies show that this legislation will prevent over 19,000 kids from taking up smoking and help over 31,000 Oregonians quit smoking. Everyone benefits when we work to decrease smoking and consumption of tobacco products and e-cigarettes.

Please join the Oregon Medical Association in supporting HB 2270 A.

The Oregon Medical Association serves and supports over 8,200 physicians, physician assistants and student members in their efforts to improve the health of all Oregonians. Additional information can be found at www.theOMA.org.