

June 17, 2019

Co-Chairs Hess, Nathanson & Members of the Joint Legislative Committee on Tax Expenditures
Sent via email to lro.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

RE: LETTER OF SUPPORT - HB 2270A TOBACCO TAX REFERRAL

Dear Co-Chairs Hess, Nathanson & Members of the Joint Legislative Committee on Tax Expenditures:

Good Shepherd Health Care System supports HB 2270A. Raising the price of tobacco by \$2.00 per pack and taxing gateway tobacco products like e-cigarettes will save lives, prevent youth from starting tobacco and will lower health care costs for all Oregonians. Tobacco use is the number one preventable cause of death and disease in Oregon. More people die from tobacco than from obesity, alcohol, motor vehicle accidents, firearms and illicit drug use combined. Tobacco is also a major risk factor for developing chronic diseases like cardiovascular disease, asthma and diabetes and can make it harder for patients to manage these conditions.

Our hospitals and providers are on the front lines of acute patient care and, consequently, witness people with chronic diseases experiencing limitations in function, health, activity and work – affecting the quality of their lives, as well as the lives of their families. We have been taking steps to protect patients, families, visitors and employees from the harms of tobacco. To fundamentally reduce the burden of tobacco in communities, Oregon needs to raise the price of tobacco products – the most effective tobacco control intervention recommended by the Surgeon General. We urge you to support HB 2270A.

Please don't hesitate to contact me at (541) 667-3409 or at dennisb@gshealth.org should you have any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Dennis E. Burke,
President & CEO

DB/slm

cc: Andi Easton, OAHHS