

June 17, 2019

Re: HB 2270A

Co-Chairs Hass, Nathanson and members of the Joint Committee on Tax Expenditures:

St. Charles Health System supports HB 2270A as an important and timely policy tool for improving the public's health. Raising the price of tobacco by \$2 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, fire arms and illicit drug use combined. Tobacco use 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.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Welander
Chief Financial Officer
St. Charles Health System