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March 21, 2023

House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care  
Oregon State Capitol  
Salem, Oregon

Re: HB 3090

Chair Nosse and Members of the Committee:

Legacy Health supports HB 3090, which will protect our kids and our communities by ending the sale of all flavored tobacco products in Oregon.

Legacy Health is a nonprofit health care provider in the Portland-Vancouver area and mid-Willamette Valley with an integrated network of care providers in over one hundred primary care, urgent care, and specialty care clinics and six community-based and nationally recognized hospitals.

Legacy Health supports HB 3090 because we witness every day one of Oregon's most persistent public health challenges – tobacco and nicotine addiction.

Tobacco use continues to be a significant public health concern and a leading cause of preventable death in the U.S. Almost 25% of high school students report using tobacco products. Nearly 90% of smokers begin before age 18, and 95% start before 26 years of age.

For decades, the tobacco industry has targeted Black Americans and our youth with menthol and now, with fruity and candy flavors. Flavored tobacco products like Cool Mint, Watermelon Ice, and Hurricane Refugee hook new generations of young users and disproportionately impact communities of color.

Our hospitals and providers are on the front lines of acute patient care and see firsthand how highly addictive and harmful nicotine is to adolescent brain development. The damage to children and teens who use flavored tobacco products and e-cigarettes can extend into the early to mid-20s. Young people who use e-cigarettes may be more likely to smoke cigarettes in the future.

Passing this legislation now will help protect our kids, prevent serious health impacts, and avoid a lifetime of nicotine addiction.

We urge you to support HB 3090.

Sincerely,

Melinda Muller MD

Melinda Muller MD (Mar 17, 2023 14:49 PDT)

Melinda Muller, MD, FACP  
Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer