

Submitter: Emily Rosenthal

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB3090

Dear Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Nelson and Goodwein, and members of the House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care:

I am a Pediatric Resident Physician and I am writing in support of HB 3090, the Preventing Nicotine Addiction bill, which will protect our kids and our communities by ending the sale of all flavored tobacco products in Oregon.

While the use of traditional cigarettes has been steadily declining among youth, the use of tobacco products has stayed relatively constant due to the introduction of electronic cigarettes. Though these e-cigarettes were initially marketed as a tool to aid older adults in smoking cessation, their use is 2-3 times more common among adolescents and young adults, with no clear evidence that their use is helpful in smoking cessation or reduction in this age group. As a pediatrician, virtually none of the patients I see in clinic are smoking traditional cigarettes; almost all the youth I see that use nicotine products are vaping. E-cigarettes, with the addition of flavorings, have essentially created a more palatable way for adolescents to consume tobacco products. Over 8 out of 10 kids start with a flavored tobacco product, and the most common reason kids say they tried a tobacco product is “because it came in a flavor I liked.”

We know that these flavored e-cigarettes and flavored tobacco products are the driving factor behind the use of e-cigarettes in our youth. The majority of high school students who use e-cigarettes report using mint or menthol flavored products, and similar trends are seen among middle school students. More than 3 million middle and high school students use tobacco and e-cigarettes, and we know that tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in Oregon, killing over 8,000 Oregonians a year.

Nicotine is highly addictive and can harm adolescent brain development. Taking action now will help protect our kids, prevent serious health impacts and avoid a lifetime of addiction.

Why is this bill necessary, when retailers are already prohibited from selling flavored tobacco to young people under age 21? Because it’s not working. The Oregon Health Authority recently reported that 25% of Oregon businesses sold tobacco to underage buyers.

Passage of HB 3090, the Preventing Nicotine Addiction Act, will go a long way to

protect youth across Oregon from falling into the trap of nicotine addiction and tobacco and e-cigarette use, as well as the host of serious health consequences associated with their use.

Sincerely,

Emily Rosenthal, MD
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