



Testimony in Support of E-Cigarette Regulations
January 27, 2015
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Oregon Nurses Association

Chair Kafoury and Commissioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association in support e-cigarette regulations.

The Oregon Nurses Association is proud to represent over 12,000 Oregon nurses throughout the state, including nearly 2000 who live in Multnomah County. ONA is Oregon's oldest nursing organization and the largest health care union in the state. With nurses in nearly every health care setting, ONA advocates for the profession of nursing, quality patient care, and public health through education, labor organizing, and public advocacy. At Multnomah County, ONA represents nearly 300 nurses who work in corrections, school based health centers, clinics, early childhood health services, and environmental health.

Oregon is one of nine states that have not implemented regulations for electronic cigarettes, which are increasingly popular. The use of electronic cigarettes in public spaces and places of employment is a public health concern. These products are *not* emission free and many questions remain regarding the long-term impact on individuals and the population health. In lieu of statewide regulations, Oregon's nurses urge Multnomah County to act to prohibit youth from purchasing electronic cigarette products and prohibit the use of electronic cigarettes in public spaces and places of employment.

The electronic cigarette industry is not prohibited from targeting advertisements at children and teens, and has done so aggressively. Many electronic cigarette ads utilize celebrity endorsements and have themes of youth-rebellion and glamour, and they've created over 8,000 flavors to choose from, like Captain Crunch, Blackberry Cobbler, and Gummy Bear. Given these tactics, it's not surprise that rates of electronic cigarette use among Oregon 11th grade students has doubled since 2011.¹ This trend poses additional implications for Oregonians, as youth who use electronic cigarettes are almost twice as likely to *have intentions* to smoke conventional cigarettes as those who had never used electronic cigarettes.²

Contrary to marketing messaging, secondhand aerosol emitted from electronic cigarettes is NOT merely water vapor. ONA supports the World Health Organization's recommendation to regulate electronic cigarettes the same way traditional cigarettes are regulated, in lieu of proof that electronic cigarettes are not harmful to the public. In fact, many newly released reports, including one conducted at Portland State University, have found the vapor of electronic cigarettes to be detrimental to health, to contain known carcinogens, and to cause measurable change in serum levels of cotinine, a metabolite of nicotine.

ONA strongly urges you to act to protect public health and children in Multnomah County by enacting regulations prohibiting the sale of electronic cigarette devices and fluids to minors and the use of these products in public spaces and places of employments.

¹ Tobacco Prevention and Education Program. 2014. Oregon Public Health Division

² National Youth Tobacco Survey. 2013. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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