



240 N Broadway Suite 127

Portland OR, 97227

RE: Tobacco Prevention Assessment

Dear Chair Kafoury and Members of the Council,

My name is Linda Roman I am the Health Policy Coordinator with the Oregon Latino Health Coalition we are a state-wide health advocacy organization that works to inform and shape health policy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. As an organization we took great interest in this work because tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. We host deep concerns that our youth will continue to have access to harmful products like e-cigarettes. The Oregon Latino Health Collation supports your considerations to establish an age restriction for purchasing and sales of electronic cigarettes to minors, and restrict vaping in enclosed public spaces. We believe these are common sense considerations.

As we to continue to make strides to protect our youth from harmful products we also like to draw your attention on the importance of implementing and consideration of a tobacco and inhalant retail licensing system. We fully support a state-wide solution because we are concerned about underage tobacco usage and illegal sales to our youth. It is clear, that without a licensing system illegal sales to children and adolescents will continue to be prevalent in our communities. We know disproportionally communities of color are highly marketed for certain products like Marlboro, Newport, and Camel—three heavily advertised brands. Emerging communities like the Latino population in Oregon is relatively young and will continue to be targeted for these products that disproportionally target young communities.

Until we implement a holistic remedy to these issues, like a retail system our communities will continue to be disproportionately targeted. Chair and members of the council we trust that in the event that a state-wide solution is not met, Multnomah County will do the right thing and implement a licensing system.

Thank you very much for your time and commitment to these communities,

Linda S. Roman, Health Policy Coordinator
Oregon Latino Health Coalition

February 5, 2015



RE:

- Prohibiting e-cigarette sales to, and use by, minors.
- Including e-cigarettes in the Oregon Indoor Clean Air Act.
- Licensing and education programs for retailers who sell tobacco and e-cigarette products

Dear Chair Kafoury and members of Multnomah County Commissioners,

My name is Nafisa Fai; I am a chronic disease prevention program manager at Upstream Public Health, of which tobacco prevention is a priority area. Upstream Public Health is a non-profit organization working to create the social and environmental conditions in which all Oregonians can be healthy and thrive. I am here with you this morning to testify in favor of your considerations as a portal to protect children in Multnomah County from tobacco and nicotine products.

Today we have an opportunity to prevent harm to future generations of children – especially those experiencing economic hardship and our youth of color. We have a collective responsibility to take care of our communities and unfortunately we have missed the boat in the past in preventing nicotine and tobacco use. We must act. Right now, 1 in 3 Native American and Black adults use tobacco. It troubles me that every 3rd high school junior you meet right now has already reported using smokeless tobacco.

We do not know yet all of the dangers of electronic cigarettes, and while I'm encouraged that adults can use them to help transition away from poisons in conventional cigarettes to less harmful nicotine vapor - we also know that nicotine is highly addictive. Considering that nearly 80% of people who try to quit smoking relapse, to me e-cigs may be switching one addiction to another. Nicotine is still poisonous and more addictive than cocaine and heroin. Recent studies suggest that nicotine causes brain development problems in children. So, why would we not want to keep these toxic and harmful products from the hands of children?

Enough is enough; we do not need to wait and should not wait for 50 years to identify this as a public health hazard. Our communities of color have already carried too much of this burden from a history of tobacco pushing in their communities. We need to impose a similar age restriction as traditional cigarettes on e-cigs and we need to identify a mechanism to ensure compliance at the point of sale level such as retail licensing system with enforcement. Otherwise, slapping an age restriction on e-cigs without retail licensing system does little to adequately address the tobacco and nicotine problem. According to the Synar report, Oregon has the highest illegal sales rate in the country; we need to address this problem and licensing can ensure that these products are inaccessible to minors.

I am also in favor of your recommendation to include e-cigs in the indoor clean air act to ensure that everyone breathes air that's free of nicotine, which affects kids and adults. I was in line for popcorn, at the theater the other day; and right in front of me there was man just vaping away as we all wait for our turns. It has become normal, and it is not just in movie theaters; I've seen people do it on the bus, in Lloyd Center and Powell's bookstore. This is becoming a trend and we need to get ahead. Thank you for your considerations.

Sincerely,

Nafisa Fai
Program Manager
Chronic Disease Prevention
Upstream Public Health

Zack Mohamed

Center for Intercultural Organizing

Good morning Chair Kafoury and County Commissioners. My name is Zack Mohamed with Center for Intercultural Organizing (CIO) and I am here to speak about adopting a retail licensing system to track who sells tobacco and e-cigarette products. Over the summer of 2014, CIO including 3 other OHEA Organizations and collaboration with Multnomah County assessed 670 potential retailers in Multnomah County and randomly selected 528 retailers to learn more about how tobacco products are placed, promoted and sold in the community. I am someone who doesn't smoke, but going through the assessment I found myself learning more about tobacco products, but one thing I learned during the assessment that was bizarre to me was that the lack of regulations to tobacco sales and the fact that there is no knowledge of accurate number of total retailers in Oregon that sell tobacco products. By now it is no surprise that Oregon has led the nation with the highest illegal sales rate of tobacco to minors. Rather being appalled I want to take action and combat this statistic by protecting our youth. Tobacco retail licensing laws have been proven effective at reducing illegal tobacco sales to minors. While the system being one of the best tools to prevent sales to minors it can also promote innovative policy solutions and like I stated earlier there is no knowledge of accurate number of total retailers in Oregon that sell tobacco products. A tobacco retail licensing law will require that all tobacco retailers obtain a license to get a better sense at the location and density of tobacco retailers. I want Multnomah County to take the steps in protecting our youth and also have statistics and data that we can be proud of! I urge you all to take in consideration of all 3 policies for tobacco products to protect public health and safety by ensuring Multnomah County is taking the right steps and hopefully this transcends all across Oregon.