



Kansas Public Health Association

- Promoting and Improving Population Health in Kansas

February 13, 2017

Robert Moser, M.D., President
Kansas Public Health Association
Senate Bill 130 and 54
Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee

Chairman Tyson and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas Public Health Association (KPHA) mission is "Promoting and Improving Population Health in Kansas". KPHA is a professional association for Kansas public health practitioners, professionals, and advocates. As a voice for public health, KPHA provides a forum for individuals and organizations to work collectively to assure conditions in which Kansans' lives will be healthy. KPHA thanks the members of the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 130 and to oppose Senate Bill 54.

Promoting health and preventing disease and injury is the cornerstone of public health and many sectors and levels in our society play a role in public health activity. Tobacco use in any form and nicotine addiction at any level is not healthy.

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the United States. While significant progress has been made over the last 50 years to reduce tobacco use, it remains a serious health issue. In Kansas, 20 percent of adults and 10 percent of high school students currently smoke cigarettes. Smoking related annual health care costs are an estimated \$1.12 billion. Non-smokers bear much of this cost, through higher insurance premiums and taxes for costly health services for KanCare and Medicare beneficiaries and uncompensated care for those without insurance who suffer from the chronic diseases brought on by tobacco use.

Do not be misled about the benefits of non-tobacco leaf products such as e-cigarettes as a harm reduction method to reducing the adverse effects of tobacco use. It is merely another means of addicting others to the use of nicotine and has not shown to actually decrease tobacco product use as e-cigarette use goes up. The rising popularity of electronic cigarettes is deeply concerning to public health professionals. In 2014, According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 2.5 million middle and high school students reported using e-cigarettes in the last month. Put another way, 1 in 7 high school

students are using these products. More recent data shows this use in adolescents continues to increase significantly.

E-cigarettes are fairly new to the market and therefore do not have sufficient clinical research to prove their harm; however, early information and research on the harms of using other nicotine-based products indicate they are not safe, especially for children, adolescents and pregnant women. Even less is known about the effects of second-hand emissions of e-cigarettes on the public's health.

Data looking at Kansas adolescent tobacco use over time, demonstrates reduced tobacco use in adolescents corresponding to previous increases in tobacco taxes in Kansas. These increased taxes impact what they will spend their limited discretionary dollars on. Communicating clearly the health harms of tobacco use and nicotine addiction also sends a strong health message to our youth.

(see https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/report_1964/ShortReport-1964.html)

Senate Bill 130 addresses the appropriate means to taxing electronic cigarettes, and thereby discouraging unhealthy behaviors. The Kansas Public Health Association supports any increase taxation on tobacco products as well as the entire volume contained in electronic cigarette cartridges – whether delivered through inhalation, or ingestion.

The Kansas Public Health Association is aware of the objections of some groups that this tax should apply only to the volume of “nicotine” and not the consumable volume present prior to consumption. However, we agree with the original intent to tax the consumable volume as this is more consistent with tobacco control efforts and counters the marketing technique of making a bitter tasting toxic substance more palatable and addictive. Besides, we do not know all of the chemicals that are included when adding flavors and aromas to these devices. By applying the taxes to all of the consumable material, it will help decrease the number of adolescents and adults who start towards tobacco use as well as encourage those who currently consume these products to stop.

KPHA thanks you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,



Dr. Robert Moser, M.D.
President, KPHA 2017