

COMMENTS ON LANE COUNTY'S DECEMBER 2014 TOBACCO ORDINANCE:

Public hearing; May 5, 2015

Edward Lichtenstein, Ph.D

- I have a nearly 50 year history of tobacco control research both at the University of Oregon and Oregon Research Institute. I'm also a member of the Eugene-Springfield Prevention Coalition but do not speak officially for them though I believe my remarks are consistent with the coalition's mission.
- The Commissioners are to be commended for the 12/14 Ordinance which addresses both conventional and e-cigarettes. The provisions are sensible, evidence-based, and should be effective in protecting youth from tobacco and nicotine exposure.
- The focus on protecting youth from e-cigarettes is especially noteworthy given the lack of regulation at the Federal level.
- The provisions that prohibit free samples, redemption of tobacco industry coupons, and other discounting practices are especially important for the ordinance. This is so because PRICE is a major driver of cigarette and tobacco consumption. Increasing price—usually via state or federal tax—reliably reduces consumption. Cigarettes are highly “elastic” [in Economics speak]: a 10 percent increase in price yields a 4 percent decrease in consumption. And the effect of price is especially strong for teens and youth.
- Therefore, any policies that restrict price reductions in cigarettes—conventional or electronic—are very likely to reduce nicotine exposure in youth.
- While regulating marketing practices will seem overly intrusive to some, there is much precedent for doing so when there is clear risk or danger to public health particularly when youth are at risk. I urge you to maintain the Ordinance.