

September 19, 2008

Andrew Epstein, MPH, CHES
School Policy Manager
American Lung Association of Oregon
7420 SW Bridgeport Road, Ste. 200
Tigard, Oregon 97224

Dear Mr. Epstein,

The Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems (OAHS) is pleased to submit this letter in support of the Oregon Tobacco-Free College Initiative.

As the statewide nonprofit organization representing Oregon hospitals, health systems, and related health organizations, our mission is to enhance and promote community health and continually improve Oregon's innovative health care industry. We have endorsed the statewide "Step Up!" campaign in which hospitals across the state are making their campuses tobacco-free and leading other local businesses to curb tobacco use. As part of this leadership, we hope that our member institutions will be seen as models for Oregon colleges and universities considering similar tobacco-free campus policies.

In addition to the overarching immediate community health benefit of reducing student and employee exposure to hazardous secondhand smoke, our members have several other specific interests in seeing colleges become tobacco-free, with benefits including:

- A healthier environment for nurses and other health care professionals employed by our member organizations who take classes or training on college campuses;
- Greater compliance with tobacco-free workplace policies among future employees, as a result of students attending consistent tobacco-free academic environments from K-12 through college; and
- Reduction in the rates of tobacco use among graduates of nursing and allied health programs (translating to increased worker productivity and reduced employee health care costs for our members who will hire these students).

Put simply, tobacco-free campus policies help colleges prepare their students for a workforce which is increasingly tobacco-free. This is especially important for community colleges, which all have programs training the next generation of health care workers.

We would like to congratulate Oregon Health & Science University and Portland Community College on their early leadership as academic institutions in Oregon going tobacco-free, and to encourage others to do the same. We would also like to suggest that hospitals participating in the Step Up! campaign may be excellent resources to assist with other local initiatives for tobacco-free college campuses. Please feel free to contact me if we can be of assistance in making these connections.

Best regards,



Diane Waldo, MBA, BSN, RN, CPHQ, CPHRM, LNCC
Director of Quality and Clinical Services
Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems