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January 15, 2020

The Honorable Jerry Hill
Senator, 13th District
State Capitol, Room 5035
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: HOAC Supports SB 793

Dear Senator Hill:

The Health Officers Association of California (HOAC), which represents the physician health officers in California's sixty-one city and county jurisdictions, supports your SB 793, which will help protect youth from the harms of flavored tobacco products.

Citing an alarming rise in e-cigarette use among youth the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a report in November 2018 showing that more than 3.6 million middle and high school students are using e-cigarettes. The stunning growth between 2017 and 2018 amounted to a 78 percent increase in e-cigarette use by high school students and a 48 percent increase by middle school students.

Eighty percent of young people who have ever used tobacco started with a flavored product. These products often mimic popular candies, drinks, or snacks in both packaging and flavor, making them particularly appealing to youth. A variety of flavored tobacco products like cotton candy, bubble gum, and mango are widely available on retail shelves.

With the recent surges in youth tobacco usage and associated public health risks, California needs to take swift action. SB 793 would prohibit the retail sale of all flavored tobacco products in California. Prohibiting the sale of flavored tobacco products is an important component of a comprehensive strategy to effectively help reduce tobacco use. We should be doing everything we can to protect young people from ever establishing this deadly addiction, and the cancer, cardiovascular disease, and other chronic conditions it causes.

Public health aims to prevent all preventable death, disease, and injury. This is an important prevention measure that will keep Californians safe and healthy. Thank you for introducing this important measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kat DeBurgh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kat DeBurgh, MPH

Executive Director