



**Kansas Hospital
ASSOCIATION**

To: House Committee on Federal and State Affairs

From: Audrey Dunkel
Vice President, Financial Advocacy

Date: February 13, 2020

Re: House Bill 2563

On behalf of the Kansas Hospital Association, I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2563, which increases the minimum age for purchasing tobacco products.

We know that tobacco use negatively affects every organ in the body. In addition, tobacco use is linked to cancer, heart disease, COPD and pregnancy complications. Unfortunately, tobacco use is primarily started during adolescence, with 90 percent of smokers trying their first cigarette by age 18. Further, the recent use of e-cigarettes, commonly referred to as vaping, has been shown to cause significant health problems, especially among youth who have adopted this new method of smoking. Teens often mistakenly believe that vaping is less harmful than smoking. In 2015, the U.S. surgeon general reported that e-cigarette use among high school students had increased by 900%, and 40% of young e-cigarette users had never smoked regular tobacco. As of January 16, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported a total of 2,668 cases of lung injury and 60 deaths linked to vaping. The majority of reported cases are among people under the age of 34.

We understand that there may be interest in addressing flavored tobacco products related to e-cigarettes that this bill does not currently consider. We would continue to support House Bill 2563 if language was added to address those concerns in the future.

The Kansas Hospital Association supports House Bill 2563 because it directly addresses what is becoming a tobacco epidemic in the United States by limiting tobacco access to those over the age of 21. Thank you for taking this important step in protecting the health of Kansans.