



House Higher Education Committee
House Bill 484 by Rep. Suleman Lalani, MD
April 1, 2025

Testimony by Maria Monge, MD, submitted on behalf of
the Texas Medical Association, Texas Pediatric Society, and Texas Public Health Coalition

Honorable Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Howard, and committee members,

The Texas Medical Association (TMA) and Texas Pediatric Society (TPS), representing more than 59,000 physician and medical student members across the state, and the Texas Public Health Coalition (TPHC), representing more than 30 member organizations, appreciate the opportunity to submit comments *in support* of House Bill 484, allowing institutions of higher education to prohibit the use of tobacco and e-cigarette products on campus.

Although rates of cigarette smoking have declined, it remains the leading cause of preventable death and disability in the U.S. Cigarette smoking accounts for nearly one in five deaths (approximately 480,000) every year in this country.¹ Over 16 million Americans live with a disease caused by smoking, costing nearly \$240 billion in health care spending and \$185 billion in lost productivity.^{1,2} Cigarette smoking is also costly to Texas. In addition to killing 28,000 Texans annually from smoking-related illness, smoking costs Texas nearly \$10.3 billion in annual health care spending and \$24.4 billion in lost productivity.³ Smoking harms nearly every organ in the body and causes many diseases – including cancer and heart disease – and increases the risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease.^{1,4} The dangers of smoking aren't limited to smokers: Second-hand smoking contributes to the deaths of over 40,000 non-smoking adults and 400 infants every year.¹

E-cigarettes and other electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) also pose many health hazards. Inhaling harmful chemicals contained in ENDS products can cause irreversible lung damage and increase the risk of negative respiratory health outcomes and cardiovascular disease.⁵ Many e-cigarettes contain nicotine, a highly addictive substance that can negatively impact youth brain development until about age 25.⁶ This makes college and university students particularly vulnerable to their harmful effects.

While TMA, TPS, and TPHC support the spirit of HB 484, we ask that it go further by requiring institutions of higher education to prohibit the use of tobacco and e-cigarette products on campus. About 99% of adult smokers start smoking before age 26.⁷ Smoke-free policies protect non-smokers from secondhand smoke exposure, help prevent young adults from starting smoking, and increase smoking cessation efforts.⁸ Strengthening this bill by requiring colleges and universities to adopt tobacco- and smoke-free policies will result in fewer lives lost to preventable death and disease, and fewer dollars spent on preventable health care costs and lost productivity.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of HB 484. We appreciate the author's and committee's efforts to curb tobacco and e-cigarette use in Texas and urge you to prohibit the use of these products on college and university campuses. For answers to additional questions, please contact Matt Dowling, TMA director of Public Affairs and lobbyist, at matt.dowling@texmed.org; Clayton Travis, TPS director of advocacy and health policy, at clayton.travis@txpeds.org; or Kaavya Venkat, MPH, Texas Public Health Coalition coordinator, at kaavya.venkat@texmed.org.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/about/index.html>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/php/data-statistics/economic-trends/index.html>

³ <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/texas>

⁴ <https://www.heart.org/en/news/2021/07/06/smoking-harms-the-brain-raises-dementia-risk-but-not-if-you-quit>

⁵ <https://www.lung.org/quit-smoking/e-cigarettes-vaping/impact-of-e-cigarettes-on-lung>

⁶ <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/e-cigarettes/health-effects.html>

⁷ <https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/tobacco-prevention-efforts/3-benefits-tobacco-free-policies-colleges-and>

⁸ <https://assets.tobaccofreekids.org/factsheets/0198.pdf>