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The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman
Energy and Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden
Republican Leader
Energy and Commerce Committee
2322 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone and Republican Leader Walden:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and medical student members, I am writing to express our strong support for H.R. 2339, the “Reversing the Youth Tobacco Epidemic Act of 2019.” With soaring numbers of youth using e-cigarette products, the AMA is deeply concerned about the current youth e-cigarette epidemic. We have long called on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to regulate e-cigarettes, particularly banning flavors and marketing practices that enhance the appeal of e-cigarette products to youth. Given the delays in FDA action to address this epidemic, it is especially important for the Energy and Commerce Committee to advance this legislation.

H.R. 2339 takes a comprehensive approach to addressing the current youth e-cigarette epidemic and in reducing tobacco use, which we believe will help save lives and protect public health. Alarming, youth use of e-cigarettes spiked in 2018, increasing by 78 percent among high school students and 48 percent among middle school students in just one year. In 2018, more than 3.6 million middle and high school students were e-cigarette users. Moreover, 97 percent of youth e-cigarette users report using a flavored e-cigarette in the last month. This legislation’s prohibition on flavored tobacco products that are appealing to kids, including flavored e-cigarettes (including mint and menthol), flavored cigars, and menthol cigarettes, is especially important to stop tobacco companies from continuing to target and addict kids with appealing flavors. The AMA has long-standing policy that supports banning menthol from tobacco products. We also strongly support prohibiting the sale of tobacco products to individuals under the age of 21 and to prohibiting online sales of tobacco products. In addition, we support extending the marketing restrictions currently applied to cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products to all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and cigars.

The AMA urges the full Energy and Commerce Committee to approve this important, comprehensive legislation during the mark-up this week.

Sincerely,

James L. Madara, MD