



## **Oregon College of Emergency Physicians**

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### **Testimony before the House Business and Labor Committee**

**February 4, 2015**

#### **HB 2671 Funding for Sobering Centers**

Chair Holvey and members of the committee, my name is Katy King and I'm here today representing OCEP, the Oregon Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians. OCEP is a medical society that has represented physicians specializing in emergency medicine since 1971 and its members share a commitment to improve emergency healthcare for all Oregonians.

OCEP supports House Bill 2671. This bill establishes the Sobering Center Support Fund. It will be paid for by increased fees from certain off-premises sales licensees for the purposes of operating or funding county sobering centers. These centers provide a safe and supportive environment for people who are publicly intoxicated or alcohol dependent. They also decrease the number of ED visits for alcohol dependent individuals and create an alternative to booking individuals arrested for public intoxication.

The American College of Emergency Physicians estimate that anywhere from 1 - 5 percent of ED visits are alcohol-related. Facilities such as the Hooper Detoxification Stabilization Center based in Portland, Oregon, offer nearly 2,000 people a year medical care and referral to ongoing treatment services. While no one likes increased 'fees', the concept of the center works by providing appropriate care at less expense than an emergency room visit.

It's the right thing to do.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I'd be pleased to answer any questions.