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Oregon Chapter, American College of Emergency Physicians (O.C.E.P)

Statement for the Record

May 6, 2015

SB 839 A, 911 Caller Good Samaritan polices for overdose victims

Chair Barker and members of the committee, my name is Katy King and I'm submitting this statement on behalf of 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 Senate Bill 839. This bill allows immunity for people who seek medical assistance for themselves or another person due to a drug-related overdose. Witnesses of an overdose often hesitate to call 911 because of fear of police involvement. The best way to encourage them to seek medical help is to exempt them from criminal prosecution, like Oregon law already does for minors who seek medical help for themselves or a friend as a result of an alcohol overdose.

Emergency physicians are frequently called upon to provide care for people of all ages who have experienced a drug overdose. The chances of surviving an overdose generally depends on how fast one receives medical assistance. Over 300 Oregonians die each year due to unintentional or undetermined drug overdose. Legal immunity for 'Good Samaritans' may help save lives.

In summary, OCEP supports policies that encourage the public to call for help during a potential overdose. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I'd be pleased to answer any questions.