

*Advocating for Oregon's Hospitals & the Patients They Serve*

**Committee:** House Committee on Rules  
**Bill:** HB 2936A, Sobering Facilities  
**From:** Andi Easton, on behalf of OAHHS  
**Date:** June 1, 2015

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Representative Val Hoyle, Representative Barbara Smith Warner and members of the House Committee on Rules, on behalf of Oregon's 62 acute care hospitals and the patients they serve, the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems (OAHHS) appreciates the opportunity to comment on House Bill 2936A.

Oregon hospitals support this legislation with the dash 19 amendments, along with many public safety officials and addiction recovery facilities from all around the state. Sobering centers are safe places for law enforcement to take individuals to stabilize from inebriation, as an alternative to hospital emergency rooms or local jails.

Fostering the development of new sobering centers by extending civil and criminal immunity to facilities acting in good faith, as this bill would do, would avoid many unnecessary hospital emergency department visits for intoxication, and would prevent injuries and accidents sustained during episodes of intoxication. Sobering facilities are well poised to connect people suffering from substance abuse disorders to recovery resources; these connections are not necessarily be made when a person is instead jailed or treated and released from a hospital emergency department.

A lack of sobering facilities is problematic in rural areas; the three centers that operate in the state today are in urban areas. There are plans to create sobering centers in Grants Pass and Klamath Falls but in order to move forward these communities are seeking the additional liability protections that HB 2936 would provide.

We ask that you join us in supporting this common sense legislation, which would alleviate pressure on local jails and busy emergency departments by more appropriately addressing a pressing community health and safety need. This legislation costs the state no money, but would almost certainly result in financial savings to public safety and health care facilities, helping to stretch scarce state resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important legislation.