

JENNIFER A. WILLIAMSON
HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 36



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Chair Greenlick, members of the community, my name is Jennifer Williamson, representative for House District 36, the west side of Portland.

Here in Oregon, we often talk about there being an urban, rural divide on many issues. For the opioid epidemic, though, there is no divide. Opioids are devastating communities in every corner of Oregon. The highest recorded rates of overdose deaths are in Tillamook, Clatsop, Lincoln, Multnomah, Linn, Lane, Douglas, Jackson, Josephine, Crook, Malheur, Baker, and Harney Counties¹.

In my community, in the Portland-metro area, it is estimated that for every fatal overdose there are at least 26, and probably many more, non-fatal overdoses, many of which require costly hospitalization.²

Since 1999, Oregon's death rate from opiates has more than tripled – since 2010, fatal drug overdoses have exceeded statewide deaths from auto accidents³. Thankfully, those numbers are starting to drop from their high as a result of innovative legislation.

In 2013, we passed legislation that required the Oregon Health Authority to prescribe criteria for training on treatment of opiate overdose and specifies requirements for training, and allowed persons successfully completing training to possess and administer naloxone for treatment of opiate overdose.

In 2015, we passed legislation requiring pharmacies to electronically report to Oregon Health Authority information under prescription monitoring program not later than 72 hours after dispensing prescription drug.

And last session, I was proud to be the chief sponsor of legislation making it easier for life-saving Naloxone to be administered to those experiencing opioid overdoses.

It is clear though that more can be done to stop this terrible epidemic. That is why I come to you today in support of Gov. Kate Brown's House Bill 4143 with the dash one amendment. I commend her for her continued leadership on this issue.

¹ Oregon opioid overdose deaths ranked by county, 2001-2015, The Oregonian, http://www.oregonlive.com/trending/2017/07/oregon_opioid_overdose_deaths.html

² Tri-County Region Opioid Trends, Multnomah County Health Department, <https://multco.us/file/59894/download>

³ Opioid Overdose Rates, Kaiser Family Foundation, <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/opioid-overdose-death-rates/?activeTab=graph¤tTimeframe=0&startTimeframe=17&selectedRows=%7B%22states%22:%7B%22Oregon%22:%7B%7D%7D%7D&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>



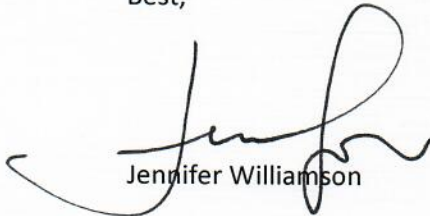
This legislation will study the insurance barriers preventing individuals from accessing the best evidence-based treatments. It will also establish a pilot program to support those experiencing overdoses by connecting them with appropriate treatments. Finally, it will provide additional accountability in the prescribing of these drugs by requiring all prescribers to register with the PDMP.

It is vitally important that we treat this epidemic plaguing our state like the public health crisis that it is. I believe this legislation will make significant progress in making that a reality.

Colleagues, since I joined this chamber, I have introduced legislation every session to address this problem. I remain heartened at the work being done to address this crisis that is destroying lives and communities.

I urge your support for this legislation.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Williamson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Jennifer Williamson