

Testimony in Support of HB4137

February 7, 2018

Chair Greenlick and members of the committee,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak in support of HB4137. My name is Brad Anderson. Since 1995 I have been the Chief of Addiction Medicine for Northwest Permanente, the medical group for Kaiser Permanente. I have treated thousands of patients with addiction in outpatient, inpatient, and residential settings.

We all know the opioid and addiction crisis requires urgent action on many fronts. This bill provides an important part of the solution: accountability for the development of a comprehensive addiction, prevention, treatment and recovery plan for Oregon. A coherent state strategy is equally important to Kaiser Permanente as it is to providers who are exclusively funded by the Oregon Health Plan.

As a physician leader working on the front lines of this public health crisis, I see the devastating impact on people's lives each day. If we truly believe that addiction is at the same level as heart disease or cancer – and that people with addiction are as “valuable” as we are – we wouldn't let this happen. We must establish a system that fully recognizes addiction as a chronic disease and that provides a coherent, adequately funded continuum of care.

We know what works. To take one example: Medication Assisted Treatment or MAT, for which Kaiser Permanente is one of the largest providers in the state. In my view, reducing barriers to universal access to MAT is a key component of a comprehensive strategy to treat this chronic disease.

I should add that I am seeking immediate appointment to the Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission. Should I be selected to serve, I would be honored to bring my 25 years of experience as an addiction medicine physician to the table. But regardless of who is on the Commission, we need this bill to ensure that it is empowered and effective to move our state forward in solving this public health crisis. Thank you very much.