



Feb. 5, 2019

Oregon State Legislature
Senate Committee on Health Care
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

Re: *HB 2339 - sobering center grants*

Chair Greenlick and members of the House Committee on Health Care:

Salem Health encourages you to pass HB 2339. Sobering centers are an example of the collaborative, community-driven solutions we need to address overcrowding in our jails and emergency departments. Perhaps most importantly, sobering centers can connect individuals battling addiction with the resources they need to make positive changes to their lives.

Salem Health has one of the busiest emergency departments on the west coast. Each year, we serve 100,000 patients. Among those are more than 3,000 individuals who are in the emergency department because they are too inebriated to be in public. For lack of a safer place, these individuals wait in the emergency department until they can be safely discharged. While they don't require the interventions of emergency medicine, they do occupy valuable space and time that could be dedicated to patients facing true medical emergencies.

A sobering center is the right place to provide the right kind and level of care for intoxicated individuals who have nowhere else to go. The hope is to help individuals at the sobering center take the first steps away from addiction.

Salem Health has pledged \$100,000 towards the operation of a sobering center in Salem. We have done this in partnership with the City of Salem and Marion County. While all three organizations have dedicated significant resources towards the project, we are still short of the necessary financing. The grant money offered in HB 2339 would help make this important project a reality.

Respectfully,

Leilani Slama
Vice president of community engagement
Salem Health