

# HIVAlliance

DA: May 14, 2019

TO: House Committee on Health Care

FR: HIV Alliance

RE: In support of Senate Bill 142A

Chair Salinas, Vice-Chairs Hayden and Nosse, Member of the Committee,

The HIV Alliance is please to support SB 142A and urges this committee to join the Senate in passing this important legislation to people living with or impacted by HIV. SB 142A will update and modernize Oregon's laws with clinically up-to-date language, while reducing HIV exceptionalism and stigma.

HIV stigma is rooted in a fear of HIV. Many of our ideas about HIV come from the HIV images that first appeared in the early 1980s. There are still misconceptions about how HIV is transmitted and what it means to live with HIV today.

HIV stigma and discrimination affect the emotional well-being and mental health of people with HIV. People with HIV often internalize the stigma they experience and begin to develop a negative self-image. HIV internalized stigma can lead to feelings of shame, fear of disclosure, isolation, and despair. These feelings can keep people from getting tested and treated for HIV.

HIV Alliance works to educate and tackle stigma in our daily work, one of the ways we can do that is by eliminating instances of HIV exceptionalism in our statutes. SB 142A will transition to the use of more general terms, like sexually transmitted infections or blood-borne infection, instead of unnecessarily listing out HIV/AIDS.

By updating Oregon's HIV related statutes, we can help reduce stigma experienced by people living with HIV/AIDS while updating our statutes to reflect the most current and medically accurate terminology. When we support people living with HIV, we make it easier for them to live healthy lives. Thank you and the HIV Alliance urges your support of SB 142A.

Respectfully,  
Renee Yandel

Executive Director  
HIV Alliance