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February 3, 2020

To: Sen. Arnie Roblan, Chair
Sen. Denyc Boles, Vice-Chair
CC: Members of the Senate Committee on Mental Health
Re: **Testimony in Support of SB 1553**

Oregon Recovers is a coalition of people in recovery from addiction, our friends and family and the providers who provide critical and valued prevention, treatment and recovery support services. The mission of Oregon Recovers is to transform the existing fractured and incomplete addiction recovery system into a recovery-based, continuum of care which recognizes addiction as a chronic disease requiring a lifetime of support.

As Governor Brown publicly announced nearly two years ago, Oregon is locked in the throes of an unprecedented health crisis. According to the latest SAMHSA Report from the National Survey of Drug Use and Health, Oregon has the 3rd highest untreated addiction rate in the nation and ranks 47th in access to treatment. As a result, five people die each day from alcohol-related deaths and we lose 1 or 2 people each day from drug overdoses. The combined annual total of this carnage is the death of more than 2100 Oregonians. Comparatively, at the height of the AIDS epidemic in 1994, Oregon lost 362 people.

We fully support the passage of SB 1553 because it will remove barriers that currently limit the behavioral health workforce and hinder access to treatment. This bill is the first logical step in building capacity to treat people with both Substance Use Disorder and Mental Health diagnoses.

Furthermore, this bill aligns with the recommendations of the Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission's Statewide Strategic Plan by identifying gaps in our system and laying the groundwork for new investments to be made in the 2021 legislative session. I would also like to stress that Oregon Recovers feels strongly that no current or future task forces or legislation, should be used as justification to delay action on the Commission's plan to save lives.

Oregon Recovers believes SB 1553 is a critical step towards designing and implementing a recovery-oriented continuum of care that responds to the needs of *ALL* Oregonians, including those with co-occurring disorders. We urge you vote "yes" for SB 1553.

For more information contact:

Andrew Swanson at 971-335-9033 or andrew@oregonrecovers.org