



Office of Mayor Ted Wheeler
City of Portland

February 6, 2020

Representative Mitch Greenlick
House Committee on Behavioral Health
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Greenlick and Members of the Committee,

I write to express my support for HB 4149, directing the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to study implementation of the Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission's biennial strategic plan.

The State of Oregon struggles to serve Oregonians with substance use disorders (SUDs) and ranks at the bottom of services delivered compared to other states across the country. We appreciate the leadership provided by Representative Sanchez in 2018 directing the Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission to develop a framework for its strategic plan in HB 4137, and again this session further directing OHA to study how the strategic plan can be implemented.

While the City of Portland does not administer behavioral health funding, the lack of adequate funding for our community partners creates a trickle-down effect that is seen every day in our City. In 2019, as part of the annual Point in Time Count, Multnomah County counted 4,050 people experiencing homelessness. Of those, over 1,495 reported substance abuse with alcohol and or drugs—and 929 of those people were living unsheltered. Robust investment in SUD treatment and other behavioral health issues is essential to addressing chronic homelessness.

We are grateful for the introduction of HB 4149. We are also supportive of additional investments in OHA to improve access to effective behavioral health services and support for Oregonians with serious mental illness or co-occurring mental illness with substance use disorders.

Thank you,

Ted Wheeler
Mayor