

Letter in Support of HB 2313

January 26, 2021

Dear Chair Sanchez and members of the House Behavioral Health Committee:

I am writing on behalf of Kaiser Permanente in support of HB 2313, which will take the crucial next steps toward implementation of the Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission (ADPC) statewide strategic plan.

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. I was appointed by the Governor to the ADPC in 2018 and had the honor of helping to develop the strategic plan under the leadership of Dr. Reggie Richardson as a comprehensive addiction, prevention, treatment and recovery plan for Oregon.

The ADPC Strategic Plan provides a comprehensive roadmap for system transformation. Other efforts currently underway – including Measure 110 implementation and the recommendations of the Governor’s Behavioral Health Advisory Council and the Racial Justice Council – can and should be aligned with the ADPC plan so that Oregon has a coherent, multifaceted approach toward solving this complex crisis.

This is not just a public health or a Medicaid issue; all efforts need to include primary care and the private insurance sector. This affects everyone. Five Oregonians die each day due to alcohol, and we lose 1-2 Oregonians each day to drug overdose. The ADPC plan will address gaps in primary care and across the multiple systems of care, including patients covered by private insurance as well as those on 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 comprehensive system that fully recognizes addiction as a chronic disease and that provides a coherent, adequately funded continuum of care.

We need HB 2313 so that the comprehensive ADPC strategic plan can be put to work and help move our state forward in solving this public health crisis. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Bradley Anderson, M.D.