



The Oregon Coalition of Local Health Officials

Testimony for HB 4081

House Health Care Committee

February 4, 2022

Chair Prusak and members of the committee, thank you for accepting my testimony in support of HB 4081, a bill to require pharmacists to offer naloxone or other antagonist to individuals filling an opioid prescription (with certain exceptions).

The Coalition of Local Health Officials supports HB 4081, as opioid overdoses continue to be a major public health problem in the United States. According to statewide data compiled by the Oregon Health Authority's Public Health Division, opioid deaths continue to rise significantly in Oregon, year after year. While the 2021 data is not yet complete, here is what we know to date:

- 2019 unintentional opioid overdose deaths total 280
- 2020 unintentional opioid overdose deaths currently total 472
- 2021 unintentional opioid overdose deaths from January to June currently total 421

Therefore, Oregon is on track to more than double its opioid overdose deaths in the span of two years. This is likely due, at least in part, to the Covid-19 pandemic and the great stress it has put on folks. We know people have been struggling with mental health, staying employed, paying bills, parenting, maintaining housing, and the toxic stress that comes along with all these things combined. Substance use in general has risen, opioids laced with fentanyl being one of the most deadly.

The good news is that opioid overdose-related deaths can be prevented when naloxone is administered in a timely manner. Naloxone is an appropriate response for all opioid overdose events, including fentanyl-involved overdoses, which are also dramatically on the rise. The Coalition of Local Health Officials supports HB 4081 and making Naloxone readily available and easily accessible – in every first aid kit in every home, office, and public space – because every dose of naloxone administered is a life saved.

Thank you for hearing this bill today, and for taking my testimony in support of HB 4081.

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