

February 4, 2022

The Honorable Chairperson Rachel Prusak
Oregon State House of Representatives
900 Court St. NE, H-489
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Pass House Bill 4081 to Prevent Overdose Deaths In Oregon

Dear Chair, Prusak:

On behalf of the HIV Alliance, I am writing you today to urge you to pass House Bill 4081. This critical piece of legislation would protect more patients in Oregon from the harms of accidental overdose by equipping them with a potentially lifesaving opioid overdose reversal medication at the same time they obtain their opioid prescription at the pharmacy counter.

HIV Alliance has long aimed to protect the health and public safety of our communities by providing naloxone distribution and training services to eight counties in the state of Oregon. We provide naloxone trainings free of charge to anyone who is interested, including police departments, local agencies, community members, and the general public. Through our Syringe Exchange services program, we distribute 1,650 naloxone doses each month to some of the most rural communities in our state, including Lane, Douglas, Josephine, Marion, Klamath, Coos, Curry, and Jackson counties.

This model last year saved 820 lives through the distribution of through the distribution of 19,812 doses to 5,385 individuals. This life saving strategy is no different with our clients using opioids vs. prescription opioid the risk of overdose is there.

In the face of the ongoing opioid epidemic in Oregon, we know that our work has been critical in combatting overdoses. The recent rise in overdose deaths in our state reinforces just how important it is to expand access to opioid overdose reversal medications for patients and consumers – but we need your assistance to help even more Oregonians.

House Bill 4081 would ensure that Oregon pharmacists who prescribe opioids simultaneously offer a prescription for naloxone *and* educate those patients about the risk of an overdose. This is an effective strategy to not only increase access to an overdose reversal medication, but also help ensure that the patient is educated—and allows for an informed decision, between a provider and a patient, on the best course of treatment.

We have the opportunity right now to help more Oregonians be prepared with naloxone when they need it most during emergency situations.

House Bill 4081 is a critical component to combatting the opioid epidemic in the state. HIV Alliance strongly encourages you to pass this bill as soon as possible. Thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

Dane Zahner
HIV Alliance

