



## Expanding Access to Harm Reduction

10/30/2023

Chair Nosse, Vice Chair Goodwin, Vice Chair Travis, and members of the House Behavioral Health and Health Care Committee,

My name is Nick Keough, and I am the Legislative Director of the Oregon Student Association. **I'm writing today to ask for your support on HB 2451.**

Oregon Student Association advocates for the collective interests of students in postsecondary institutions in Oregon. This includes the physical and emotional well-being of students. As I am sure the members of this committee are aware, the opioid crisis is causing tremendous harm in communities across the State of Oregon. This crisis has been particularly exasperated in recent years with the influx of illicitly manufactured fentanyl that has emerged as a key driving force behind this tragic and rapid increase in morbidity and mortality. As a high-risk group, young people and students are highly susceptible to accidental overdoses that have led to tragic and unnecessary death.

University of Oregon student Emanuel "Manny" Dreiling is one of the students and young people who tragically lost their life to illicitly manufactured fentanyl. Dreiling was found by a friend lying face down by his desk in his Eugene apartment a day before Christmas 2020. Dreiling was supplied with 32 fake oxycodone pills made of fentanyl and was dead two days later. Dreiling was studying urban development and expected to graduate in the Spring of 2021. He was one of four children, Gina's Russo's only son and the second youngest child in their family.

**It is for these reasons and stories that our student leaders feel that expanding access to harm-reduction supplies is critical.** Particularly, students are strongly urging the legislature to decriminalize fentanyl testing strips. Under current state statute, fentanyl testing strips and other testing devices are classified as drug paraphernalia. This has resulted in barriers for students distributing these life-saving materials on their college and university campuses. For instance, the University of Oregon General Council recently determined that providing fentanyl testing strips would be in violation of a state law. Had this not been the case, UO student Emanuel "Manny" Dreiling may still be alive today.

We cannot continue to lose more young people and students to this crisis. **We must take bold action now to expand access to harm reduction materials. We urge you to support HB 2451.**

Thank you,

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