



**American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention**

To: Senate Committee on Healthcare

From: Angela Perry

On Behalf Of: American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Oregon Chapter

Date: 2/14/2023

RE: Support for SB-818

Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and Committee Members:

AFSP Oregon is in full support of SB-818. Health professionals and professionals in training regularly encounter patients who are at risk for suicide. Across the U.S. in the month prior to their death, 45% of people who died by suicide had contact with a primary care physician, in the year prior to their death, 77% of people who died by suicide had contact with their primary care physician.

Many primary care physicians are unprepared to assess, treat, and manage suicide risk and it is not a routine part of their training or continued education requirements. Gatekeepers, people who are trained in suicide prevention like teachers, parents, clergy and first responders, are typically trained to refer those at risk for suicide to a health professional. Therefore, those health providers need to be equipped to handle those referrals. Medical professionals need to be trained and be comfortable in suicide assessment, treatment and management.

Senate Bill 818 allows for the development of a list of suicide risk assessment and treatment continuing education opportunities and requires authority to develop continuing education opportunities if none exist.

We strongly urge you to support this bill and help save lives of all Oregonians who are in need of suicide risk assessment and treatment.