

Testimony SUPPORTING HB 2544.
Submitted by Oregon Recovers
March 13, 2023
House Committee ON Behavioral Health and Healthcare

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chair Nelson, Vice-Chair Goodwin, and Members of the House Committee On Behavioral Health and Healthcare:

My name is Teri Morgan-Urie, and I am the Program Director at Springfield Treatment Center. I also serve as the Co-Chair of Oregon Recovers. We are a movement of people in recovery from addiction with the mission to transform Oregon's fractured and incomplete addiction recovery system into a recovery-based, continuum of care which recognizes addiction as a chronic disease. I'm also a person in long-term recovery. I haven't used drugs or alcohol in nearly 10 years.

I'm here today to urge you to vote for HB 2544.

Oregon has a severe addiction crisis that affects hundreds of thousands of People:

- 18.22% of Oregonians age 12 and older have a Substance Use Disorder--the **second highest** rate in the country. That means 669,753 Oregon residents age 12 and up have a Substance Use Disorder. That's about 11,162 people per Oregon House District, and roughly 22,325 people per Oregon Senate District.
- 12.34% of Oregonians age 12 and older have an alcohol use disorder--the **fifth highest** rate in the country. That means 453,609 Oregon residents age 12 and up are addicted to alcohol. That's about 7,560 people per Oregon House District, and roughly 15,120 people per Oregon Senate District.

As someone who works on the front lines of this crisis, I can tell you addiction is lethal.

I want to focus on alcohol for a moment, because its impact is too often ignored.

- Alcohol is a toxic, addictive carcinogen that kills more Oregon residents than all types of drug overdoses combined. The World Health Organization has stated that no amount of alcohol consumption is safe for our health, and excessive alcohol use is Oregon's third-leading cause of preventable death and disease.
- In 2020 alone, Oregon recorded 2,536 alcohol-related deaths. That's about 42 deaths per Oregon House District, and roughly 85 deaths per Oregon Senate District.

Meanwhile, lack of access to treatment is killing Oregonians

- Oregon ranks 50th--dead last--in access to treatment.
- Our ability to provide youth treatment has shrunk. According to the Lund Report, Oregon had 144 treatment beds for adolescents struggling with addiction in 2017. In 2020, there were only 100. And last April, there were only 13 beds.
- There are 305,645 Oregon residents ages 12 through 17. About 24,360 of them have a substance use disorder. Put plainly, 13 treatment beds are not enough.

- As a treatment provider, it is disheartening to work with clients struggling with addiction who need residential treatment and can't access it. Our process for assessing clients at the appropriate level of care is almost a moot point when the appropriate treatment is not available to the individuals needing it. Imagine someone being diagnosed with cancer and being told the required or recommended treatments are not available in our state. We must work to change this.

Treatment saves lives, and we need to fund more of it.

Please vote in favor of HB 2544, and give our residential treatment facilities the funding they so desperately need. Thank you.