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TO: The Honorable Chair Fahey
House Committee on Rules

FROM: Tom Jeanne, MD, MPH
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SUBJECT: HB 3610 – Taskforce on alcohol pricing and alcohol addiction

Chair Fahey and members of the committee; my name is Tom Jeanne and I am the Deputy State Health Officer and Epidemiologist at the Oregon Health Authority Public Health Division. I am here to provide the committee information on population-level public health data and evidence-based practice to address alcohol-related harm in Oregon. HB 3610 establishes a 17 member Governor appointed task force that will study alcohol addiction and prevention, resources for services, costs and workload to the state, and alcohol pricing.

Excessive alcohol use remains the third leading cause of preventable death and disease in Oregon. Excessive alcohol use includes binge drinking, heavy drinking, underage drinking, and drinking by pregnant women. It drives some of the most pressing health and social challenges we face today.

In Oregon, the alcohol-related death rate has increased by 30% over the past 10 years, killing over 2,500 people in 2020. Deaths directly related to alcohol increased by over 20% in a single year during the COVID pandemic (2019-2020). During this time, alcohol sales also reached an all-time high.

Excessive alcohol use fuels domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), risky sexual behavior, stillbirths, miscarriages, fetal alcohol spectrum disorders and other birth defects, car crashes, serious injuries, lower educational outcomes, heart disease, liver disease, cancer, drug and alcohol dependence, and a host of other health and social problems. Excessive alcohol use places a heavy

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burden on Oregon's behavioral health prevention, treatment and recovery service systems. Alcohol use disorder is the most common substance use disorder in the state, and Oregon has one of the highest untreated substance use disorder rate in the nation.

Excessive alcohol use costs the Oregon economy over \$4.8 billion per year in lost workplace productivity, health care expenses, criminal justice costs, and motor vehicle crashes related to excessive alcohol use. However, the greatest costs of excessive alcohol use are among those impacted by it including medical costs, opportunity costs and risk of harm to individuals, families and entire communities. Likewise, individuals impacted by excessive alcohol use have the most to gain from policies that lower barriers to recovery.

That's why their voices are among the most important in this conversation, affirmed by the inclusion of a drug and alcohol addiction advocate on the task force to ensure that solutions are informed by both technical expertise and lived experience.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important public health issue and I welcome your questions and the opportunity to be a resource to this committee.