



The Oregon Coalition of Local Health Officials

April 24, 2023
Senate Health Care
HB 2395 A

Good afternoon Chair Patterson and members of the committee. For the record, my name is Sarah Lochner and I am here on behalf of the Oregon Coalition of Local Health Officials – CLHO for short – the statewide association for local public health.

CLHO is in strong support of all of HB 2395 A, which combined a number of bills into one – as making short acting opioid antagonists widely available, easily accessible, and getting the general public comfortable with administering it will save lives and reduce the strain on first responders and hospitals.

In addition, I want to highlight the harm reduction and data pieces – because these are core public health strategies.

For some folks, harm reduction strategies seem too radical. But the general idea is that to get people who use substances into the treatment continuum, we must meet them where they're at, reduce harm, and save lives. And if you've ever had a loved one in the throes of addiction, this is what you'd want too.

Harm reduction programs can help to reduce costs by reducing the negative health consequences of drug addiction, helping individuals to maintain employment and income, reducing criminal activity and related costs, and reducing the need for social services.

This is why the provisions of HB 2395 are important. They decriminalize several items of drug paraphernalia including fentanyl test strips and pipes. Why should we decriminalize pipes? Well, because they are harm reduction strategy. Folks who smoke their drugs have more control over how much they ingest, so they are more likely to not

overdose. Whereas if they take pills, which are pre-portioned, they take what happens to be in the pill and that's really a giant unknown with street drugs.

Lastly, data. Good data is the life blood of public health. We cannot solve a problem if we don't know what it is, who is affected, and where. As such, we need to standardize the data collected across the state so that we can compare apples to apples.

CLHO urges your support on HB 2395 A. Thank you.