



**Date:** February 7, 2024

**To:** Joint Interim Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

**From:** Oregon Health Equity Alliance (OHEA)

**RE:** Oppose House Bill 4002

Chairs Lieber and Kropf, members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Health Equity Alliance (OHEA). OHEA is one of ten regional health equity coalitions across Oregon and we serve Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties. We are a people of color-led collaborative, organized to center and uplift the wisdom of our communities of color through racial justice informed health equity policies and practices as part of the movement to dismantle white supremacy and shift the imbalance of power.

As a health equity advocacy organization, we believe HB 4002 directly targets and harms communities most impacted by addiction. Addiction is not a crime, it is a symptom of our toxic culture and dysfunctional health system. Oregon must do better than HB 4002 to address the addictions crisis. HB 4002 is an inadequate and harmful approach that further criminalizes our most vulnerable communities and wastes taxpayer dollars. HB 4002 will result in more people going to jail, more people being harmed, more people being displaced, more families being disrupted, and more people dying from overdoses.

Rather than punishing the vulnerable, health advocates need to focus on real solutions that will help our communities instead of returning to ineffective, failed policies and practices. Solutions like increasing withdrawal management, detox, recovery, sober housing, and other services, rather than creating a backlog and waitlists across the state for care that have made the addiction and overdose crisis unmanageable. These services should be accessible and on demand to everyone who needs them regardless of geography, language spoken, or cultural background. And we need to pay particular attention to our rural neighbors who continue to be left out and behind in these statewide initiatives.

We know HB 4002 will inflict more government harm and violence on Black and brown communities. Black and brown Oregonians will be arrested at higher rates and are most likely to face incarceration and harsher sentencing. We have seen this in the past, and the legislature has the power to learn from these experiences and not repeat history. With this OHEA strongly urges you to oppose HB 4002.

Thank you for your time.

Oregon Health Equity Alliance