



February 26, 2024

To: Joint Committee on Addiction and Community Safety Response

From: Emerson Hamlin, Political Organizer, Oregon Nurses Association

Re: Support for the Jail-Based Medication for Opioid-Use Disorder (MOUD) Grant Program, HB 4002

Co-Chairs Lieber and Kropf, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). ONA is a professional association and labor union representing over 17,000 nurses and healthcare professionals. Our members work in urban and rural hospitals, clinics, school-based health centers, home health, and county health departments across Oregon.

One role of county health departments is to provide care to individuals in custody. Our nurses working in corrections have shared that drugs, particularly opioids, are easily accessible and commonly used by adults in custody. They report that a majority of their patients struggle with substance use, and they tell us about those they have lost to overdose. Their anecdotal evidence is backed by data: according to the Oregon Department of Corrections, approximately two-thirds of Oregon's adults in custody are struggling with substance use disorder and could benefit from treatment.¹ Despite this level of need, treatment opportunities for substance use disorder are few and far between. With the lack of treatment options, and under-resourced healthcare providers, most adults in custody are left to struggle alone.

This problem is worsened because adults in custody do not have access to OHP or Medicaid for addiction treatment services. This is an enormous barrier to accessing necessary care, as the cost of treatment can be considerable. The MOUD Grant Program included in HB 4002 would create a grant program for counties to create or expand treatment options for adults in custody struggling with substance use. It covers a spectrum of services, including medication, telemedicine, mobile treatment units, acute withdrawal screenings and medication storage services. With this grant, people struggling with opioid addiction can get the support they need. Our nurses believe deeply that everyone, including adults in custody, deserve access to high-quality health care. This grant program will help them provide it. ONA urges your support.

Sincerely,

Emerson Hamlin

¹ Hartung, Daniel M., et al. "Fatal and nonfatal opioid overdose risk following release from prison: A retrospective cohort study using linked Administrative Data." *Journal of Substance Use and Addiction Treatment*, vol. 147, Apr. 2023, p. 208971, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.josat.2023.208971>.