

Dear Chair Prosanski, Chair Kropf, Co-Chair Manning, and members of the Joint Committee on Addiction and Community Safety Response,

My name is Andrew Early, and I work at 4D Recovery as a Deflection Outreach worker. I urge you to support HB 3197 to increase revenue for the prevention and treatment of youth substance use.

At 4D Recovery, our mission is to provide—in partnership with systems, communities, and individuals—comprehensive services that help adolescents, young adults, and families recover from substance use disorders. Our vision is a future where systems, communities, and individuals work together to ensure that all people receive the support needed to find and sustain recovery from substances. HB 3197 is a crucial step toward making this vision a reality by ensuring that Oregon's youth have access to the necessary prevention and treatment services to support long-term recovery.

Oregon lacks adequate resources to address our alcohol and drug crisis, especially for youth—untreated substance use results in harm to individuals, families, communities, and businesses. Additionally:

- Most people who develop a substance use disorder begin using alcohol or drugs before the age of 18.
- In Oregon, youth are more likely than the national average to start drinking or using substances early in their lives.
- Oregon ranks among the worst states for youth access to addiction and mental health services.
- Schools, families, and communities are struggling to manage rising mental health needs, while waitlists for youth treatment programs are long or nonexistent in rural areas.
- Research shows that for every \$1 invested in prevention, up to \$10 is saved in healthcare, criminal justice, and lost productivity.
- Youth who get help early are less likely to experience homelessness, incarceration, or overdose later in life.

- The Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission is finalizing a Youth Strategic Plan that will have options for immediate and long-term strategic impacts to address the growing crisis.

As an outreach worker, I witness firsthand the transformative impact that access to care can have on individuals. Reflecting on my own adolescent years, I recognize that there were limited options for teenagers in need of support. As a parent, I am deeply committed to seeing a world where adolescents have access to the level of care they require. The substances facing our youth are becoming increasingly dangerous, and it is my firm belief that no corners should be cut when it comes to saving lives.

Early intervention is critical. By implementing preventative measures and providing adequate care for those beginning their journey down a path of pain, suffering, and potential death, we have an opportunity to save lives and improve our communities. Investing in the well-being of our youth ensures a healthier, safer future for everyone.

In Oregon, we must ensure that our young people have access to the necessary resources and care when needed. I see the consequences of insufficient care every day, and as a parent, I do not want that for my own child, nor any child. For these reasons, I fully support HB3197 and the positive impact it can have on our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Andrew E