

**Written Testimony of Rob Bovett, AOC Legal Counsel,
before the House Committee on Healthcare in support of
House Bill 2257 with the Dash-1 Amendments**

Tuesday, February 5, 2019

Dear Chair Greenlick, Vice-Chairs Hayden and Nosse, and Representatives Alonso Leon, Boles, Drazan, Keny-Guyer, Mitchell, Noble, Prusak, and Salinas,

The Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) urges your strong support of [House Bill 2257](#) with the [Dash-1 amendments](#). The tragic scope and causes of the opioid epidemic in our Nation are [well known](#). Many of us have long [called](#) for strong action. Oregon Governor Kate Brown established an [Opioid Epidemic Task Force](#) to combat the epidemic. I have had the privilege of serving on the Governor's Task Force, which consists of medical experts, treatment specialists, and other key stakeholders. HB 2257 is part of the work product of the Task Force, and deserves your strong support.

I won't go through the details of HB 2257, as others will be doing just that. Instead, I wanted to highlight just a few points that others might not cover:

1. Two Other Key Bills

In addition to House Bill 2257, two additional legislative items, also stemming in part from the Task Force, will be addressed in separate bills, namely:

- a. A statewide drug takeback program that will provide the public with convenient access to secure collection vaults in pharmacies for the safe disposal of unused prescription drugs. That bill will soon be introduced by Representative Schouten.
- b. Further enhancements to increase the availability of naloxone, the key lifesaving drug that can reverse an opioid overdose. That bill will soon be introduced at the request of Lane County.

2. Continuity of Care While in Custody

Continuity of care for persons in custody and being transferred from jail to prison is a part of the puzzle HB 2257 addresses. Subsection (2) of Section 2 of the bill requires counties to study various aspects of this issue, and report findings and plans to the Department of Corrections (DOC). This is an unfunded mandate, and many county Sheriff's Offices don't have adequate resources to fulfill the mandate. However, it is my understanding that DOC intends to assist the counties by performing the bulk of the work required in that subsection.

3. What's Missing from House Bill 2257

As the Committee is aware from [prior hearings](#), 38 states require some form of "mandatory query" of the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) when prescribing opioids. Oregon is in a 12-state minority that does not have such a mandatory query. HB 2257 does not remedy that deficiency. AOC strongly encourages this Committee to fix that important issue in HB 2257 or some other legislative vehicle.