



OREGON PSYCHIATRIC
PHYSICIANS ASSOCIATION

Date: February 5, 2019

To: The Honorable Mitch Greenlick, Chair
The Honorable Rob Nosse, Vice-Chair
The Honorable Cedric Hayden, Vice-Chair
Members of the House Health Care Committee

From: Craig Zarling, MD, Co-Chair
Maya Lopez, MD, Co-Chair
Oregon Psychiatric Physicians Association Legislative
Committee

RE: Position statement on HB 2257 Oregon Opioid Policy

Chair Greenlick, Vice Chairs and and members of the House Health Care Committee:

Please accept this statement for the record from the Oregon Psychiatric Physicians Association (OPPA). The OPPA, a district branch of the American Psychiatric Association, was established in 1966. OPPA serves as the organization for medical doctors (psychiatrists) in Oregon working together to ensure humane care and effective treatment for persons with mental illness, including substance use disorders, and compassion for their families.

OPPA supports HB 2257, which declares the legislative intent to consider substance use disorder as a chronic illness. Substance use disorders are a major case of morbidity in Oregon and the U.S. – the prevalence of alcohol use disorder is at 14 percent nationally. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) notes the estimated lifetime prevalence rate for alcohol use disorder in the U.S. is 29 percent and it places a significant strain on individuals, their families and public health.

Significant substance use disorders truly are chronic and often lifelong problems. Treatment for them needs to reflect this and not be a partial

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treatment destined to fail and leave people demoralized. Effective, evidence-based interventions are available, yet many disorders, such as alcohol use disorder, remain undertreated.

HB 2257 has other recommendations from the Governor's Opioid Epidemic Task force, including a requirement that the Oregon Health Authority convene an advisory group to make recommendations for accreditation requirements for substance use treatment providers, a study prohibiting health insurance public payers from requiring prior authorization for reimbursements related to substance use disorder treatment, and pilot projects to provide substance use disorder treatment to pregnant people. The OPPA would be pleased to act as a resource for these activities.

Defining substance use disorders as a chronic illness leads to policies that create appropriate resources and support people who are struggling with substance use disorders. We appreciate the leadership of the governor and task force members in developing these recommendations and urge passage of this bill.