

Chair Gelser and members of the committee,

I am writing to urge your support of SB682. As a retired psychologist who has worked both in urban and rural parts of the state I have seen the desolation that some of our citizens experience. This too often leads to suicide as well as the long term impact on a community and family of the person who commits suicide. This becomes even more of a concern in the face of the isolation because of a pandemic. Also, the recent increase in gun sales highlights the problem. Firearms are used to commit over half of the suicides in Oregon.

There are many good programs in Oregon at this time responding to these concerns. I am especially pleased with some of the crisis lines we have established. However, unlike for youth, there is no unified plan to address the diversity of challenges in preventing adult suicide. The OHA 2020-24 state health improvement plan only briefly addresses this issue, several of the documents on the state site are outdated or behind sign-in walls, and most of what is found is data on deaths rather than direction on how to prevent adult suicide.

We need a structure that gives us a broad view of the problem, supports local and nonprofit programs that are working on the ground to prevent suicide, and provides information and support for how to tailor programs to the diverse needs of our population. Just as with the Youth Suicide Prevention program, a centralized advocate can both increase awareness and help improve intervention and prevention.

In addition, training all who come in contact with people who are hurting through a Board requirement is important. I continue to be surprised at the myths that drive much of even professionals response to the talk of suicide.

Thank you for your attention. Please give support to SB682.

Carol Greenough, Ph.D.