



Health Department

March 25, 2021

House Committee on Health Care
900 Court St. NE - Remote F
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: HB 2376 - Requires health care provider who prescribes opioid to offer prescription for naloxone, or similar drug, and educational material under specified circumstances.

Chair Prusak, Vice-Chairs Hayden and Salinas, and members of the Committee, my name is Jessica Guernsey and I am the Public Health Director and Local Public Health Administrator for Multnomah County.

Multnomah County writes to you today to express our strong support for HB2376 and respectfully urge you and your colleagues to quickly pass this critical legislation. As Oregon's most populous county, we are keenly aware of the need to do everything we can to address the ongoing opioid epidemic in our state. **This includes passing House Bill 2376, which would require Oregon providers to simultaneously offer a prescription for naloxone when prescribing opioids and educate their patients about their risk of an overdose.**

As you may know, Multnomah County has been a leader in expanding access to potentially lifesaving opioid overdose reversal medications, such as naloxone. Our syringe exchange offers individuals overdose rescue kits, which include naloxone. We are an active member of the Tri-County Opioid Safety Coalition, which works to decrease opioid misuse and harms by coordinating the efforts of public health, medical, behavioral health, payer, and patient communities. However, even with our active efforts, numbers clearly show that more must be done to ensure that more Oregonians at-risk of opioid-related overdose can access these medications. In fact, over [330 people in Oregon died](#) of drug overdoses just between January and June 2020 – a 40 percent increase from the same time period in 2019.

The good news is that the Oregon legislature has the opportunity to curb fatal overdoses by passing House Bill 2376, which mandates the co-prescribing of naloxone for at-risk patients. We already know that co-prescribing laws are effective. In states that have already enacted co-prescribing policies, access to naloxone has [increased](#)

dramatically as more health care professionals prescribed naloxone to patients, compared to states that had no such policy in place.

HB2376 alone will not be a cure-all for the opioid epidemic – we understand this. It is, however, a critical tool that must immediately be implemented to save more lives. We urge you to support this critical bill that will equip more Oregonians with a potentially life saving overdose reversal medication at the same time they obtain an opioid prescription.

On behalf of Multnomah County, we thank you for your continued leadership on this pressing issue.

Sincerely,

Jessica Guernsey
Public Health Director
Multnomah County Health Department