

March 30, 2021

House Committee on Health Care  
Oregon State House of Representatives  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

**RE: Support Oregon House Bill 2376 to Curb Fatal Opioid Overdoses**

Dear Chair Prusak and members of the House Committee on Health Care:

Now more than ever, we must expand access, awareness, and availability of opioid overdose reversal medications such as naloxone amid the convergence of the opioid epidemic and COVID-19. That is why the Mental Health & Addiction Association of Oregon (MHAAO) strongly supports **House Bill 2376, which would require Oregon providers who prescribe opioids to simultaneously offer a prescription for naloxone and educate their patients about their risk of an overdose.**

The COVID-19 pandemic, along with social isolation, stress, and economic insecurity, has greatly impacted those struggling with mental health conditions and addiction in Oregon. The anxiety, grief, changes at home and work, and an ongoing sense of uncertainty from the COVID-19 pandemic have all created unanticipated challenges for people with a substance use disorder (SUD).

During this uncertain time, our team at MHAAO has continued to work day-in and day-out to promote self-directed recovery and wellness for all individuals. We have continued to support people where they are on their journey, free from judgment or agenda, and one of the most critical tools that we have repeatedly turned to is naloxone, a potentially life-saving medication that is used to reverse the effects of an opioid overdose.

Simply put, **House Bill 2376 would ensure that more Oregonians at-risk of opioid-related overdose have access to potentially life-saving overdose reversal medications, such as naloxone.**

Passing House Bill 2376 is a significant step we can take right now to address the opioid epidemic and the rise in overdose deaths across our state. In the ten states that have already enacted co-prescribing policies, access to naloxone increased dramatically as more health care professionals prescribed naloxone to patients.

We must do everything we can to curb increasing overdose death rates. That begins with passing House Bill 2376.

**We urge you to vote to advance House Bill 2376 to protect more Oregonians from the fatal harms of opioid overdoses.**

Thank you for your leadership on this issue and we look forward to your continued partnership.

Sincerely,

Janie Gullickson MPA:HA, CRM II, PSS  
Executive Director, Mental Health & Addiction Association of Oregon (MHAAO)