



4/8/21

To: House Committee on General Government  
From: Oregon Council for Behavioral Health (OCBH)  
Re: Opposition to HB 3194

Chair Wilde, Vice Chairs Lively and Leif, Members of the Committee,

Oregon Council for Behavioral Health (OCBH) is the statewide association of over 50 providers across the state who deliver treatment for substance use disorders and mental illness. Our members have been at the table for decades as Oregon has attempted to tackle addiction in all forms – from the meth crisis to startling opioid overdose rates. Throughout these efforts, a quiet yet overwhelming reality has gone unaddressed, one we all know to be true because we see it in our communities and our families: the vast majority of Oregon’s addiction crisis is rooted in addiction to alcohol.

Increased access to alcohol results in increased costs to our healthcare system and personal costs to Oregonians and their families. These costs could be mitigated by increasing prevention services and behavioral health treatment, however this bill fails to address these needs.

There is broad bipartisan agreement that behavioral health access has been constricted by insufficient funding for decades. The lack of resources to adequately fund prevention, education, and treatment leads to the system we have today – one in which we pay the price of alcohol addiction in the form cancer treatments, criminal justice interventions, and increased utilization of our child welfare system. This measure serves to increase access to alcohol without a commensurate increase in access to behavioral health supports.

This session, we are seeking to address the addiction crisis in a number of ways: we’re hoping to finally achieve parity with physical healthcare coverage, we’re supporting efforts to decriminalize addiction, and we’re developing new workforce recruitment tools. We are concerned by efforts like this measure which undermine said progress by increasing access to alcohol without increasing access to treatment.

We urge your opposition of HB 3194.

Thank you,

Heather Jefferis MA  
Executive Director  
Oregon Council for Behavioral Health