

I am the Associate Director of the Portland DBT Institute here in Portland, Oregon. We are the largest and oldest free standing provider of Dialectical Behavior Therapy (the only treatment proven to work for suicidal teens) in the world.

HB 3139 runs counter to evidence based practice when working with suicidal teens and there is data supporting following recommendations in HB 3139 (e.g. breaking confidentiality to disclose suicidal thoughts to parents of teens) increases rates of suicide- if a teen feels their therapist will break confidentiality to tell their parents about a suicidal thought, it then makes them less likely to disclose thoughts of suicide in the future, therefore increasing risk of death. A cornerstone of evidence based practice for suicidal teens is the maintenance of confidentiality. This legislation, while well meaning, may inadvertently increase the risk of death by making teens not want to report suicidal ideation for fear of their therapists breaking confidentiality and by causing therapists to be reluctant to ask about suicide due to not wanting to disclose information to families,

A better approach is to expand HB 2315 to mandate more training to providers in evidence based approaches to suicide prevention.