



ALEX CUYLER

Intergovernmental Relations Manager
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DATE: February 15, 2021
TO: House Committee on Behavioral Health
RE: HB 3037, relating to youth suicide response

Dear Chair Sanchez and Members of the Committee:

The Lane County Board of Commissioners would like to offer its support for HB 3037. Lane County has long had a legislative priority that supports polices and funding which address the prevention of suicide.

Here is why Lane County suggests you continue towards a work session for this measure:

- The majority (~75%) of suicide deaths that occur in this population in Oregon are 19-24.
- It is often the case that 19-24 year olds do not live at their home of record (“domicile” in the text of the bill) and may die away from home. When they die, the impact of the death affects their home community and their community of residence.
- Currently we rely on the rare generosity and chance of other jurisdictions to know that our community has been impacted by a death when a Lane County youth dies elsewhere. This bill, at page 3 lines 6-10, would require them to inform us so that we can care for the bereaved and limit contagion (a term used to describe the unfortunate reality that suicide can serve as a trigger to other suicides).
- Of particular import to Lane County is that we have multiple institutions of higher education serving youth of this age and it’s important that our Community Mental Health Program Director have the legislative authority to contact the local mental health authority in other areas when a student dies so they can be informed, care for the bereaved, and limit contagion.

Finally, both Lane County and the University of Oregon are (separate) recipients of federal grant funds that were established by the advocacy of former Oregon Senator Gordon Smith, who lost his son to suicide. Our respective programs have slightly different focuses, but both focus on youth suicide prevention. Should you desire to hear more about this work, please do not hesitate to reach me at 541-514-6522 or alex.cuyler@lanecountyor.gov.

ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED BY ALEX CUYLER, LANE COUNTY
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS MANAGER