



Testimony HB 2381 – House Behavioral Health Committee

February 14, 2021

Dear Chair Sanchez, Vice Chairs Moore-Green and Nosse, and Committee Members:

I am submitting testimony in support of **HB2381** on behalf of the Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide. The Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide advises the Oregon Health Authority on implementation and development of the statewide Youth Suicide Intervention and Prevention Plan. Its 48 members are appointed by the director of OHA and include leaders from the public and private sectors, legislators, subject matter experts, suicide attempt and loss survivors, and young people from across the state of Oregon.

Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide

Vision : In Oregon all young people have hope, feel safe asking for help, can find access to the *right* help at the *right* time to prevent suicide, and live in communities that foster healing, connection, and wellness.

Mission : The Alliance advocates and works to inform and strengthen Oregon’s suicide prevention, intervention and postvention policies, services and supports to prevent youth and young adults from dying by suicide.

HB2381 changes the statute relating to youth suicide to include all young people below the age of 24, rather than limiting it to ages 10 to 24. This will ensure that suicide prevention planning and intervention in Oregon will address the needs of children under 10 who will benefit from upstream prevention efforts to build resilience and social emotional skills that can prevent suicide. It is also important that our suicide prevention planning includes support for young children after a suicide occurs in their family or circle. This is a key prevention strategy as research shows that losing someone to suicide increases the long-term risk of the loss survivor dying by suicide.¹

Sadly, this change is also needed because a small number of children under age 10 have died by suicide in recent years. HB2381 ensure that suicides of children under age 10 are reported to OHA and included in statewide data. This will help us to understand the scope of this issue. We urge you to support HB2381.

Sincerely,

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¹ Guldin, M.-B., Li, J., Pedersen, H. S., Obel, C., Agerbo, E., Gissler, M., . . . Vestergaard, M. (2015). Incidence of suicide among persons who had a parent who died during their childhood: A population-based cohort study. *JAMA Psychiatry*, 72(12), 1227–1234.