

January 27, 2022

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

RE: House Bill 4081 Will Prevent More Accidental Opioid Overdoses From Becoming Fatal

Dear Chairwoman Prusak and members of the committee:

I write to you today on behalf of Henry's Uncle, an organization working to end the stigma around addiction and save lives. Of the over 20 million Americans who suffer from a substance use disorder, less than 10% of them will ever receive medical help. The reason? Stigma and shame around addiction often keep people with a substance use disorder (SUD) in the darkness and suffering from a chronic disease that can be treated. It's time to bring addiction out of the darkness and into the light – but we need our elected leaders' help to promote policies that make this goal a reality.

This means supporting House Bill 4081, which will expand access to naloxone by requiring Oregon pharmacists who prescribe opioids to simultaneously offer a prescription for an opioid overdose reversal medication and educate their patients about their risk of an accidental overdose.

These measures – known as “co-prescribing” – help protect at-risk patients from the fatal harms of accidental opioid overdose by requiring a healthcare provider prescribing an opioid to an individual to educate patients about their risk and prescribe an overdose reversal medication under certain circumstances. And we know that these laws work. Across 5 states (AZ, FL, RI, VT, VA) with mandated naloxone prescription laws, the [total number](#) of naloxone doses dispensed in the 90 days after implementation of the co-prescription mandate grew 255%, from 6,208 to 22,067 compared with the 90 days before adoption of the mandate.

The Oregon State Legislature must continue efforts to fight the opioid epidemic that is devastating our communities, and it can begin by passing House Bill 4081. We urge you to support House Bill 4081 without delay – legislation that will increase access to potentially lifesaving opioid overdose reversal medicines to prevent even more opioid overdose fatalities from occurring. With your support, we can draw one step closer to eliminating the stigma around substance use disorder and combat this opioid epidemic once-and-for-all.

Thank you for your continued leadership on this critical issue and your continued commitment to ensuring the health and safety of all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Erik Kilgore
Henry's Uncle