



January 29, 2023

Members of the House Committee on House Committee
On Behavioral Health and Health Care
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

RE: HB 2395 - Opioid Harm Reduction Policy Package

Dear Chair Nosse and Members of the Committee:

New Narrative urges you to pass HB 2395, the Opioid Harm Reduction Policy Package. Your support is critical to increasing access to life saving interventions, including opioid antagonists.

New Narrative (NN), formerly known as Luke-Dorf, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, integrative mental health provider focused on the social determinants of health operating in Washington and Multnomah counties, within the greater Portland Metro area. NN operates nearly 40 sites, which include outpatient and residential mental health treatment, transitional and permanent supportive housing, and peer support programs. Our mission is to provide resources so people seeking mental health care can develop the “tools to thrive, not just survive.” Serving over 2,300 people annually, and with nearly 300 employees, we envision a future where everyone seeking mental health care can live the life they choose.

We are not a substance use treatment agency, but we see the effects of the opioid epidemic in our treatment participants and communities. It had been a goal of our agency for years to have naloxone available at all sites, but we were not able to do so because of licensing regulations. In 2022, we made the decision to have naloxone on-site at as many locations as possible and to train all-staff on its use. We were not able to obtain naloxone for free or even at a discount, so we paid full price. Three days after the first naloxone was delivered, an unassociated community member, assuming a mental health agency would have access to opioid antagonist, came searching for our help as their partner had suffered a potentially fatal overdose. This individual was not breathing when they arrived but was successfully revived after our staff administered two doses of naloxone. What could have been a traumatic event in our community, became an inspiring story, and a testament to how urgently Oregonians need easy access to this medication.

By removing the red tape and reducing the cost of naloxone and other evidence-based harm reduction strategies, agencies such as ours will be better able to serve our communities and save lives.

New Narrative appreciates your consideration of HB 2395. I am happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Julie Ibrahim, CEO