



January 30, 2023

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Nelson and Goodwin, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Emerson Hamlin, and I am a political organizer for the Oregon Nurses Association. We represent 15,000 nurses, including RNs, advanced practice nurses, and allied health workers. While I am speaking in support for HB 2395-2 today, I would also like to take this opportunity to express ONA's support for all other bills on the agenda that, if passed, will track opioid antagonist use and increase access to testing equipment and short-acting opioid antagonists.

Passing HB 2395-2 is critical to address opioid overdoses. This thorough omnibus bill increases access to opioid antagonists and decriminalizes proven harm reduction methods. It requires OHA to create a cross-county notification system in the case of accidental youth overdoses, and standardizes overdose data, providing necessary information for effective policy making in the future. Lastly, this bill includes some technical fixes to increase access to substance use treatment for minors, provides legal protections for school staff who administer naloxone, and allows the use of all short-acting opioid antagonists approved by the FDA in Oregon statute.

Nurses in Oregon are on the front line of the opioid epidemic. OHA's Opioid Overdose Public Health Surveillance Update from December 2022 found that the number of opioid overdose visits to emergency departments and urgent care clinics has dramatically increased since 2019. Far worse, the same report found that there were 332 unintentional opioid deaths in 2022. Our members feel strongly that 322 deaths due to overdose are 322 too many, and that the state must take action. Making short-acting opioid antagonists easily available, in addition to the other pieces of this legislation, will save lives. ONA urges a yes vote on HB 2395-2. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Emerson Hamlin

Political Organizer at Oregon Nurses Association