April 11, 2023

Submitter: Jarely Castro
On Behalf of:
Committee: Chair Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care
Measure: HB 2395-Opioid Harm Reduction Policy Package

Dear Chair Nosse and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jarely Castro, and I am a law student at Willamette University College of Law. As an Oregon resident, I care deeply about measures to mitigate the opioid problem in the community, and I fully support HB 2395.

As you may know, there is a big fentanyl crisis in Oregon. After the pandemic, mental health became a big concern, and as a result individuals turned to drugs to cope with these feelings. Many individuals, especially the youth, are unaware of the deadly consequences caused by fake pills laced with fentanyl. Vulnerable populations are also at risk. Lack of support, mental health resources, and information regarding the opioid problem are underlying issues that continue to make this crisis prevalent in our community.

I fully support the decision to increase access to naloxone. This drug can save many lives from unintentional overdose. You never know when you will be in a situation where you will need to act quick to save a life, but without the proper tools and information the community is helpless. This bill gives our community the tools to act quickly to save someone's child, sibling, parent, or friend.

As someone who has lived in a rural community, I am fully aware that there are many healthcare disparities. For example, medical facilities may be far from your location and often many of them lack proper training and medication to treat individuals who have overdosed. Rural communities in Oregon need naloxone to avoid these problems. The accessibility of naloxone will undoubtedly make a big difference in rural communities.

Overall, this bill has the potential to save many lives. It is a step in the right direction and provides us with the tools to act quickly. Naloxone is vital, and I fully support the decision to increase its accessibility.

Sincerely,

Jarely Castro