



April 20, 2023

To: House Committee on Rules

From: Emerson Hamlin, Political Organizer, Oregon Nurses Association

Re: Support for HB 3610

Chair Fahey, Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson and Kropf, and members of the committee,

Thank you for considering this testimony in support of House bill 3610 on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). ONA is a nurses union and professional association representing over 16,000 health care workers and providers, including registered nurses, advanced practice nurses, and allied health workers. Our members work in urban and rural hospitals, clinics, school-based health centers, home health, and county health departments across Oregon.

Oregon nurses see the significant health impacts of excessive drinking, ranging from chronic conditions like high blood pressure and liver disease, to cancers with low survival rates. According to the Oregon Health Authority, excessive alcohol use is the third-leading preventable cause of death and disease in Oregon, killing six Oregonians a day. Furthermore, while Oregonians of all backgrounds and races struggle with excessive drinking, health impacts are not experienced at equal rates across Oregon's population. Members of Black and Indigenous communities, and community members who have lower incomes and less education, are more likely to experience alcohol-related health consequences. Unfortunately, our state is not well-positioned to help those who are struggling: Oregon ranks 50th, among all 50 states, in access to treatment.

Oregon must change our relationship with alcohol to have a healthy, thriving state. HB 3610 will begin this process by creating a task force to fully grasp the extent of the alcohol crisis. Gathering this information will teach us how to better prevent alcohol related harms, and lessen existing impacts. Passing HB 3610 is good for individuals, families, and communities impacted by excessive drinking, and is the first step towards ensuring that they receive the support they deserve. ONA urges a yes vote.

Sincerely,

Emerson Hamlin