



MEMORANDUM

To: Senator Deb Patterson, Chair, Senate Health Care Committee
Senator Cedric Hayden, Vice-Chair, Senate Health Care Committee
Members of the Senate Health Care Committee

From: Courtni Dresser, Vice President of Government Relations

Date: April 24, 2023

Re: OMA Comments in Support of HB 2395

The Oregon Medical Association (OMA) would like to express strong support for the passage of HB 2395 which works to combat the rapid increase in opioid deaths with a variety of initiatives. This bill provides broader access to short-acting opioid antagonist treatment and distribution kits so that those who may be at risk of overdose have access to life-saving medication when they need it. It also exempts certain items that can be used to save lives such as drug testing strips from being defined as “drug paraphernalia” which under current law makes them illegal.

Further, HB 2395 protects children from overdose by having kits available in schools and allows a minor to pursue addiction treatment. Finally, this bill directs district medical examiners or medical-legal death investigators to notify local mental health authorities if a death is suspected to be result of opioid or another drug overdose.

The fentanyl and opioid crisis have been escalating across Oregon and the OMA believes that HB 2395 will take a giant step towards saving lives immediately. Substance abuse is a disease and we should do everything we can to make sure Oregonians who suffer from this disease live long enough to pursue treatment. Having access to life-saving treatment in the community ensures that those suffering from substance abuse and their families have every chance to seek recovery.

In 2021, the OMA Board of Trustees adopted a policy to supports programs that increase access to Naloxone, a short-acting opioid antagonist, in Oregon as well as offer better public education and training on Naloxone use and harm reduction interventions. Oregon physicians are bound to

adopt policies that work to extend the lives of their patients which is at the heart of their support for HB 2395. This bill empowers citizens to react to an overdose without having to wait for medical treatment which shaves vital minutes off access to life-saving measures. It also mandates the reporting of opioid and drug related deaths so that local agencies can react in a way that could help mitigate more tragedy.

Currently, an average of three Oregonians die every day from an opioid overdose which is why it is so urgent that this bill passes. We believe it is vitally important to provide the aid and funding necessary to give our loved ones a second chance at living.

For these reasons, the OMA asks you pass HB 2395

The Oregon Medical Association (OMA) is the state's largest professional organization engaging in advocacy, policy, community-building, and networking opportunities for Oregon's physicians, physician assistants, medical students, and physician assistant students. The OMA's members speak with one voice as they advocate for policies that improve access to quality patient care, reduce administrative burdens on medical professionals, and improve the health of all Oregonians. Additional information can be found at www.theOMA.org.