

To: Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Hayden, and members of the Senate Committee on Health Care
From: Kavi Shrestha, University of Oregon Student Body Vice President
Date: April 26, 2023
Subject: Support HB2395 A

My name is Kavi Shrestha, I am the student body Vice President at the University of Oregon and am honored to write in support of HB2395.

On March 3rd, a Eugene man was sentenced to 33 years in federal prison for being responsible for the death of a 20-year-old University of Oregon student. He is dead because of fentanyl.

In May of 2022, two Eugene teens at the age of 17 died from an overdose. They are dead because of fentanyl.

In October of 2022, the Eugene police seized 18 pounds of suspected fentanyl powder **less than a mile** away from my university's campus— **enough to kill around 4 million people**.

Fentanyl is present in our community, and we are scared.

In response to all of this, I worked with a group of my peers to launch a “Narcan project”, focused on getting the life-saving drug naloxone in the hands of students.

Right off the bat, we ran into our first barrier. Wanting to purchase and distribute Narcan through student government, we were quickly met with confusion with the University due to **unclear statutes and liability concerns**— an issue directly addressed in this package.

This was a familiar story, as one of my peers had previously launched a fentanyl test strip distribution project, but was quickly shut down as the **project would be a violation of state law because strips are still labeled as “drug paraphernalia”**— another problem that the package addresses.

Both of these projects came about from a desire to prevent us students from watching *our* peers die. **We shouldn't have to wait for more and more people to die before deciding to act.**

Eventually, we were able to distribute hundreds of doses of Narcan to the student body, but only possible with the **help of our non-profit partners**. We shouldn't have to rely on overworked non-profits to bear such a large burden for distributing naloxone. We should move toward more reliable access for places dealing with at-risk populations, like harm reduction clinics and schools.

Throughout the project, I have heard the stories of my peers and their loved ones overdosing, and can't bear to hear more.

Whether we want to accept it or not, college students are directly engaged in the opioid and fentanyl crisis. Youthful experimentation should not lead to a death sentence.

Please support this Opioid Harm Reduction package. People should not lose their lives for making a mistake.

Students and your constituents are begging you to act, and we hope you do the right thing and support HB2395.

Thank you,

Kavi Shrestha
ASUO Vice President