

Submitter: Lee Stewart  
Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services  
Measure: SB1547

#### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 1547

As a parent who had to make the incredibly difficult decision of sending my teenage child to treatment without their consent, I urge you to support SB 1547. It is a decision that no parent makes easily. Rather, it is one usually made out of desperation, when all other measures to help their child have failed.

It is critical that a parent be allowed to help save their child from drugs, and most often that means without their consent. Children's brains are primed for addiction, and rare is the child who has just discovered the euphoria of drugs, who willingly chooses to give them up. Without a fully developed prefrontal cortex, it is impossible for most children to think of long-term consequences over immediate gratification – especially when under the influence of drugs

I am grateful that cannabis is included in this bill, recognizing that today's high potency products are extremely addictive for young people. Cannabis Use Disorder is listed in the DSM-5, with the same diagnostic criteria as other substance use disorders, such as alcohol and opioid, and it needs to be treated with equal urgency. This is especially true when today's high potency cannabis products have been shown to lead to serious mental illness, such as psychosis and suicidality.

It is furthermore important that health insurance be required to cover the cost of cannabis treatment, just as it is required to cover treatment for other addictive substances. Despite a national parity law that requires mental illness to be covered in the same way as physical illness, our insurance provider denied coverage for our son's CUD treatment.

Oregon Student Health Survey data indicates that approximately 20% of kids in Oregon have used Cannabis by the time they graduate high school. NIH national data suggests that close to 10% of those kids will go on to develop a Cannabis Use Disorder. In 2022 it was estimated that 7 million youth and young adults below the age of 25 in the US had a cannabis use disorder. (National Survey on Drug Use and Health)

Oregon is in the midst of an addiction crisis. It is critical that we allow caring adults to intervene for children struggling with substances to get them the help they need.

Please support SB 1547, and thank you for your time,

Lee Stewart