



March 14, 2025

Re: Support for House Bill 3321 – Primary Prevention State Strategy

Co-Chair Prozanski, Co-Chair Kropf, and Members of the Joint Committee on Addiction and Community Safety Response:

The Deschutes County Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) strongly supports House Bill 3321 which will direct the Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission to develop and implement a primary prevention state strategy to prevent the onset of substance use in Oregon youth. Substance use presents a significant health risk to young people, particularly because adolescents are especially vulnerable to the addictive effects of substances because their brains are still developing. There is strong evidence linking the early initiation of substance use among youth to an increased risk of them eventually using other substances and developing a life-altering addiction. In fact, 90% of adult substance use disorders start in adolescence.

Primary prevention efforts—which are designed to stop use before it starts—can interrupt the pathways to addiction and overdose. Youth primary prevention also reduces the risk of substance use and lessens other negative outcomes, including low educational status, unemployment, unintended parenthood, and an increased risk of death. Oregon has made important investments in treatment and harm reduction, but prevention—the key to reducing future harm—has not received the sustained focus or funding that is critical to our success in reducing our state’s substance abuse problem. HB3321 ensures that Oregon youth receive proper leadership, planning, priority, action, & accountability: the foundation for a systemic upstream focus on youth and primary prevention in Oregon.

We urge the committee to support HB 3321 and any additional amendments that support a primary prevention statewide strategy. Thank you for your leadership on these critical issues. By supporting this bill, you will safeguard Oregon’s youth, strengthen families, and promote healthier communities.

Sincerely,

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- Tami Pike
- Robert Ross
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- Ruth Vernotico

For More Information

Please visit:
<https://www.deschutes.org/health/page/public-health-advisory-board>



To promote and protect the health and safety of our community.

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