

*March 18, 2025*

TO: Joint Committee on Addiction and Community Safety Response

RE: House Bill 2929

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 2929, an essential piece of legislation that will improve Oregon's response to substance use disorders. A single point of accountability is crucial for guiding our state toward a future where substance use is prevented, individuals with substance use disorders receive timely treatment, and long-term recovery from addiction becomes the norm. The Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission (ADPC) has already established itself as this vital point of accountability, and HB 2929 significantly enhances its ability to lead us toward that promising future.

As a primary prevention advocate and member of the ADPC Prevention Subcommittee—and part of the group referenced by Rep. Walters last week—I have witnessed firsthand how our state's primary prevention efforts are undermined by fragmented leadership and a lack of accountability. In our review of upstream efforts to prevent, delay, or reduce substance use, we found no single statewide group dedicated solely to this crucial work. Instead, numerous initiatives across Oregon's systems fail to create a cohesive strategy. In contrast, we learned from other states with significantly better outcomes that a clear, coordinated plan covering the entire continuum of care—across multiple agencies—is essential for success. Their approach includes rigorous measurement and reporting, transparent allocations of prevention funding, and a rejection of the unproductive divide between behavioral and public health. We believe Oregon can achieve these same benefits through the collective efforts outlined in HB 2929, 2502, 3321, and 3375.

This is why the ADPC stands out. Its leadership, diverse membership, expert Prevention Subcommittee, and comprehensive planning activities illustrate a commitment to holistic, balanced policies. Their readiness to embrace greater responsibility and accountability presents a critical opportunity to enhance the state's response to substance use disorders.

HB 2929 establishes a framework for effective decision-making and vital accountability. Without the clear guidance it offers, our limited resources risk being diverted into existing, fragmented structures, resulting in the same issues of poor tracking and misallocation. Additionally, given the numerous challenges faced by Oregon's youth, it is crucial that the bill mandates ADPC's plans—especially those focused on youth prevention—to be consistently reported to the Legislature.

The bill also empowers the ADPC by expanding its contract authority and enhancing its capacity to deploy resources efficiently and effectively across the state, including upstream prevention efforts. Equally important, HB 2929 reframes the ADPC's responsibilities to prioritize not only service effectiveness but also access to evidence-based prevention, treatment, and recovery support. By enabling the ADPC to establish state policies and hold agencies accountable, HB 2929 will align all systems toward the shared goal of reducing substance use in Oregon.

Since children are not just small adults, HB 2929 must also incorporate clear reporting requirements for youth and primary prevention. This provision will ensure that young people receive the focused attention they deserve and will reinforce the ADPC's role as the leading organization in creating and maintaining effective, proactive substance use policies.

I respectfully urge you to support HB 2929 and empower the ADPC to lead Oregon's efforts toward a more coordinated, effective, and prevention-focused system of care. Thank you for your leadership and for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Pam Pearce