

Dear Chair Prosanski, Chair Kropf, Co-Chair Manning, and members of the Joint Committee on Addiction and Community Safety Response,

My name is William Clark, and I work at 4D Recovery Clackamas as a Prime+ Mentor. I urge you to support HB 3197 to increase revenue for the prevention and treatment of youth substance use.

At 4D Recovery, our mission is to provide—in partnership with systems, communities, and individuals—comprehensive services that help adolescents, young adults, and families recover from substance use disorders. Our vision is a future where systems, communities, and individuals work together to ensure that all people receive the support needed to find and sustain recovery from substances. HB 3197 is a crucial step toward making this vision a reality by ensuring that Oregon's youth have access to the necessary prevention and treatment services to support long-term recovery.

Oregon lacks adequate resources to address our alcohol and drug crisis, especially for youth—untreated substance use results in harm to individuals, families, communities, and businesses. Additionally:

- Most people who develop a substance use disorder begin using alcohol or drugs before the age of 18.
- In Oregon, youth are more likely than the national average to start drinking or using substances early in their lives.
- Oregon ranks among the worst states for youth access to addiction and mental health services.
- Schools, families, and communities are struggling to manage rising mental health needs, while waitlists for youth treatment programs are long or nonexistent in rural areas.
- Research shows that for every \$1 invested in prevention, up to \$10 is saved in healthcare, criminal justice, and lost productivity.
- Youth who get help early are less likely to experience homelessness, incarceration, or overdose later in life.

- The Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission is finalizing a Youth Strategic Plan that will have options for immediate and long-term strategic impacts to address the growing crisis.
- **Person in Recovery / Peer Mentor / Parent:**

As a person who struggled with alcohol all of my life. I feel like we are a product of our environment, situation and who we surround ourselves with. As humans we are hardwired to crave acceptance by those around us. Many people who struggle with alcoholism see it as a social piece because it's everywhere. They may not even understand they have a problem until it's too late and they hit their proverbial rock bottom. The resources that this funding would create would be instrumental in rehabilitation and supporting those individuals who may see no hope in their current situation.

I was one of those people who hit rock bottom. Not only did I hit rock bottom I took the shovel out and started digging, Alcoholism, Substances and then crime. I didn't understand that there was help. I thought I was alone. It wouldn't be until after I spent years in prison and facing more prison time that I actually wasn't alone. That if you know the right people or ask the right questions you may find what you're looking for before Jail, prison or death. Having funding to cultivate the right resources will allow us to help those who are struggling find the necessary help.

If there is more funding available for resources I feel like we could have a major impact on adolescents' alcoholism and substance use. With more resources there would be a greater chance—that asking the most basic questions could lead to individuals getting the help they need and avoid long term alcoholism, substance use and crime.

Individuals who struggle alone with alcoholism and substance use disorder are where we are losing people everyday. I felt so alone and I needed to drink to fill the void in return allowing me to progress into my alcoholism so deeply that I thought the only way out would be death. At the time I had no idea there was help, I didn't know places like 4D Recovery existed.

I was stuck committing crimes, drowning myself with alcohol and using meth, In and out of jails and prison because I didn't know there was help. I didn't ask the right question to the right person that I could never find.

Crime is a byproduct of addiction and alcoholism which affects every community in many different ways either directly or indirectly. When individuals who suffer from alcoholism and substance use can no longer support their habits within conventional means most will tend to turn to a path that requires less work and pays the most, Crime.

With alcoholism and addiction we cultivate the perfect environment for another addiction, Criminality. I feel like if we focus on the underlying issues such as alcoholism and substance use we will directly have an impact on Courts, Jails and Prison systems.

I also feel like having more funding and resources will have a direct effect on people being injured or killed in DWI, business or dwellings being burglarized and the loss of life and properties.

We have the ability to make changes and address all of these issues. We have the ability to pass laws to get funding and in return get more resources to help individuals like myself not stay stuck. To get the help we so desperately want and need.

I will have two years sober and clean this May. That wouldn't have been possible without places like 4D Recovery and other Organizations that exist to help those who struggle with alcohol and addiction. We can do better by focusing on where it all starts. If we get funding to focus on adolescent Alcoholism and Substance use we can address many of the issues we see in adults that suffer from long-term alcoholism and substance abuse.

As a Peer Mentor at 4D Recovery, I see firsthand the transformative impact of access to recovery support. By investing in prevention and treatment, we not only save lives but also build stronger, healthier communities where young people have the opportunity to thrive.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,  
William L Clark

Peer Mentor at 4D Recovery