

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

My name is Alexa Page, and I work at 4D Recovery as a Prime plus supervisor in Clackamas. 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.

I started drinking and using drugs at a very early age, 14 to be exact. I was facing many challenges at home including abuse and neglect. I went from being a straight A student involved in many extra curricular activities including theatre, volleyball, and soccer to being homeless strung out on meth and heroin at 17. I was involved with crime and sometimes not at my own will. But I was very young and vulnerable. My family did try to get me help by sending me to the only youth treatment center in Oregon at that time. It was called northwest and it consisted of being locked up like in jail, no medications to help detox, laying on a mat on the floor, children would act out and be injected with tranquilizers. This treatment has since been shut down and sued for child abuse as far as I am aware. To me this experience was helpful but it only consisted of a 21 day stay with no after care. I cannot imagine what my life would be like if I had access to better care as a youth trying to find my way. I know that we have already started to increase access for people struggling with addiction here in Oregon, but the youth do not have a proper form of treatment available to them unless maybe they have families that can afford to send them out of state. I know for me that was not an option and I hate to think of all the youth that could have gotten a fresh start sooner but just weren't able to because of their background.

Since getting clean I have started a family and worked with other addicts to help them see that there is a chance to live another way. I am now 5 years clean, I have a four year old daughter. God forbid she ends up having to face addiction like I have and there isn't proper treatment accessible to her. I urge you to consider how this bill can affect the addiction crisis, consider the lives it will save and the pain it will prevent. The youth of today need a voice to share in their struggles and stand up for them. Please be a part of changing the statistics and outcomes for the people of our great state. Thank you for reading.

As a Peer mentor supervisor 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,
Alexa Page