

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

My name is Jessica McCurdy and I urge you to support HB 3197 to increase revenue for the prevention and treatment of youth substance use.

According to many reports, Oregon lacks resources to address our alcohol and drug crisis, especially for youth—untreated alcohol and drug 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.

My son was just 14 when he was introduced to marijuana at a friend's home. The dad of this friend had medical marijuana due to being a fire fighter and having been injured on the job. We lived in a suburb of NW Portland. My son was active in sports, full of energy, perceptive and a very loved kid. Marijuana led him to abusing Xanax, Alcohol, and eventually within 9 years would be smoking Fentanyl and Crack, living in a park in NE Portland, committing crimes just not to get sick from opiate withdrawal. I did EVERYTHING I could and thought possible to get him help. I sent him to numerous treatment centers in Arizona, California, Idaho....all because Oregon treatment centers had long waiting lists. Thankfully we had great insurance and he could get some help in other states. My son is now 600 days sober after his final recovery center in Washington and active in the recovery community. He is the Admissions and Intake Coordinator at Hope Center Recovery in SE Portland. He is just

25 years old and is helping people as they are released from jail, coming out of living on the streets—he helps support them into clean and safe sober living homes (Premiere Sober Living) and day treatment at Hope Center Recovery. He has a healthy lifestyle today. He overdosed several times and I could be sharing a very different experience of his story.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Oregon needs more help with Addiction Recovery. Please.

Jessica McCurdy