



April 2, 2025

HB 2282 - Support with amendments

House Economic Development, Small Business, and Trade

Chair Nguyen / Vice Chairs Diehl and Isadore and members of the committee. For the record, my name is Sarah Lochner, here representing the Oregon Coalition of Local Health Officials, commonly called CLHO, on behalf of Oregon's 33 county-based public health departments.

CLHO is in support of HB 2282 with the forthcoming amendments that will increase the number of minor decoy inspections at state-run alcohol stores under the regulation of the OLCC. An annual inspection should be the minimum, so bringing it up to this standard is key.

In addition, the amendment will provide additional training for clerks. If clerks are fined, my hunch is all it would take is one fine to learn the lesson and for them to comply with the law from then on. All of these changes will help improve adherence to the law and protect minors from easy access to alcohol and tobacco products sold in OLCC stores.

Public Health believes in primary prevention – which means we want to delay or prevent youth from using substances like alcohol and tobacco products because these substances impede the development of healthy brains and bodies.

And we know that the earlier kids start using, the more likely they are to develop an addiction and/or move on to other substances. Anything we can do to prevent easy access to these products will not only help individuals live healthier lives, but will eventually decrease health care costs to the state.

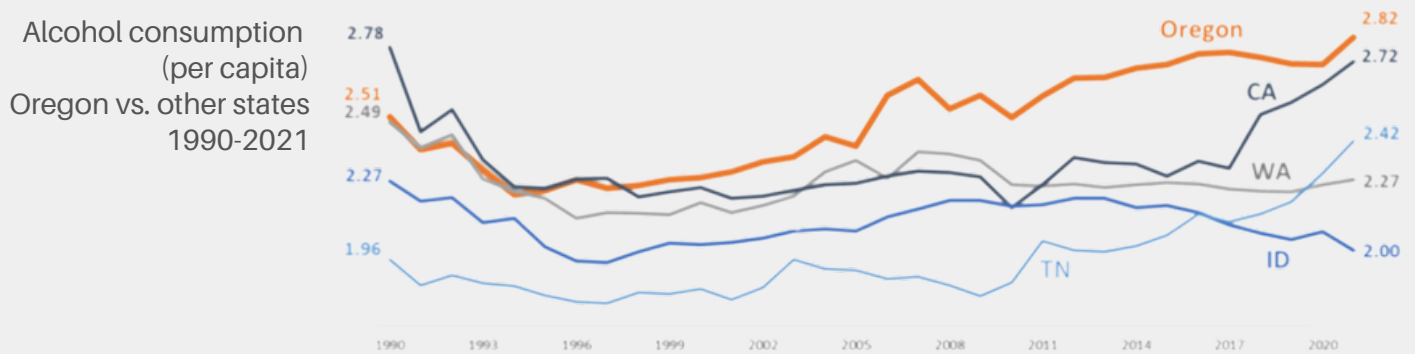
While alcohol in moderation has historically been considered “fine” in our society, and “normal experimentation” for teenagers, the science has evolved. We now know that any consumption of alcohol increases the risk for seven types of cancer, and a whole host of other chronic diseases and mental health challenges.

It's time that we educate each other and our kids about the health risks of alcohol. When we know better, it's time to do better.

Please support HB 2282 with the amendments for the health of Oregon's kids. Thank you.



Oregonians drink more than people in most other states – about 2.8 gallons of pure ethanol per person per year. **That's almost 600 drinks a year** for each Oregonian over the age of 14.



And we have higher rates of alcohol-related disease and deaths. Alcohol use is the third-leading cause of preventable death in Oregon, claiming 2,500 lives each year. That's nearly double the number of people who die from illicit drug use.

The cost to society is also much higher, estimated at \$4.8 billion a year.

According to the latest Oregon Health Authority adult health survey, 85% of Oregonians think alcohol is a serious threat to society and nearly half (45%) say drinking has caused trouble in families.



## Alcohol is everywhere

Today, we are offered alcohol more frequently than ever - a glass of wine at a haircut, a beer at a board game store, a mixed cocktail at a water park. Alcoholic drinks are served in movie theaters, nail salons, and in some children's play spaces. We can order alcohol online or drive to a restaurant and take cocktails to go.

The alcohol industry spends millions to create enticing ads, many of them targeting young people. Like tobacco ads allowed on radio and television until the 1970s, there are few restrictions on the way alcohol can be promoted. And alcohol companies keep repackaging their products into "hard seltzer," "hard kombucha," and "hard cola," that appeal to young people and seem to count less than a "real" drink.

## Forty years of expanding alcohol access

For the past four decades, Oregon has expanded public access to alcohol, passing legislation in nearly every session that made it easier for producers to sell and consumers to buy.

We have some of the lowest beer and wine taxes in the country and haven't raised those taxes for over 40 years. Lower alcohol prices lead to more people drinking, more deaths and more harms.

CLHO acknowledges the economic benefit that alcohol sales have on the state's economy, generating over \$300 million a year in tax revenue and providing thousands of jobs. We don't oppose responsible drinking, but many of us drink too much, increasing the chance of health risks and other harms.

Now it's time to address those harms by:

- **Curtailling the expansion of easy access to alcohol**
- **Funding statewide evidence-based primary prevention programs**
- **Increasing awareness of alcohol's health impacts so Oregonians can make informed choices**

### Excessive drinking in Oregon

One in eight Oregonians has an alcohol-use disorder. One in five drinks excessively, which means having four or five drinks on one occasion or drinking eight or more drinks a week for women, and 15 or more for men. Twenty-seven percent of adults (ages 18-34) in Oregon binge drink.

**1 in 8** Oregonians has an alcohol use disorder

**1 in 5** Oregonians drinks alcohol excessively

### Bummer Alert: alcohol isn't healthy

Alcohol has been classified as a carcinogen since the late 1980s. It contains ethanol, a toxic chemical which damages DNA and prevents the body from repairing itself. Last year, the World Health Organization declared that no level of alcohol consumption is safe for health. We used to hear that low or moderate amounts of alcohol may reduce the risk of heart disease, but more recently researchers have found that drinking more than one drink a day actually raises risk. New research also shows that even moderate amounts of **alcohol can raise your risk of dying from any cause**.

#### Excessive drinking can cause:

- prostate cancer
- colon cancer
- high blood pressure
- strokes and heart disease
- cancers of the head and neck
- depression
- anxiety and memory loss
- breast cancer
- three types of liver disease



Source: Rethink the Drink

This 2023 evidence review examined over 100 studies including nearly 5 million people and found an increased risk of death for women who drank 25 or more grams a day and men who drank 45 or more grams a day. (This translates to a little less than two drinks a day for women and a little less than three drinks a day for men.)

Alcohol use is linked with seven types of cancer, including oral, head and neck, colon, liver and breast cancer. Yet few people know about this connection: only one in four women said they knew that alcohol can cause breast cancer.

Alcohol use also increases the risk for domestic violence, suicide, injuries and car crashes, risky sexual behavior and lower educational attainment.

It's time to acknowledge these risks, to stop expanding access to alcohol and to start addressing the harms of excessive use.