



Oregon Alliance

4/2/2025

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

On behalf of the Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs I am writing to express our support for HB 3197.

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. Chronic adult homelessness is directly related to youth homelessness and instability.
- 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.

The Oregon Alliance is a dedicated champion and established voice in advocating for the safety, health, and well-being of children, youth, families, and communities across Oregon. We are a diverse group of organizations serving Oregon's kids and their families at home, in school, in residential settings, and within the community. Our members urge you to pass HB 3197.

Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue. We welcome any opportunity to collaborate and support efforts to increase revenue for the prevention and treatment of youth substance youth.

Sincerely,

Vera Stoullil
CEO, Oregon Alliance

Empowering Organizations,
Transforming Lives