



April 4, 2025

Re: Support for House Bill 2954, Expanding Addiction Prevention Services

Co-Chair Senator Prozanski, Co-Chair Representative Kropf, and Members of the Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response.

The Deschutes County Board of County Commissioners strongly support Oregon House Bill 2954 which proposes to expand primary prevention programs for addiction through local Public Health. In January 2024, the Lund Report published a statewide analysis of drug prevention programs in Oregon's schools, stating that the majority of Oregon schools do not use effective prevention education programs and that districts "receive little support and guidance from the state to select substance use prevention programs." This is unacceptable as Oregon spends only 6% of the substance use budget on primary prevention.

HB 2954 will support innovative prevention programs that help combat Oregon's growing substance abuse crisis. Deschutes County Public Health has been very effective at braiding our funding streams to maintain a minimum staffing level in our Prevention programs, but this infrastructure is fragile and not sustainable. Resources for prevention have been insufficient, unstable, and stagnant across Oregon for too long, despite the immense critical need. While treatment efforts are essential, it is equally important to address the root cause of substance misuse through prevention to keep us ahead of crises like opioid and other drug overdoses.

Most people that use tobacco, alcohol, or illicit drugs start and become addicted to substances before the age of 18 when they are too young to realize the risks of use and their developing brains are more susceptible to addiction. For more than two decades, we have known that evidence-based primary drug prevention programs deliver results. Primary prevention programs provide a vital lifeline to our communities by reducing the number of drug overdoses and deaths; keeping citizens safer; saving taxpayers money; and preventing substance use disorders from starting.

Sincerely the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners,

Anthony DeBone
Chair

Patti Adair
Vice Chair

Phil Chang
Commissioner

CC: Senators Andrew Broadman, Diane Linthicum, and Mike McLane
Representatives Vikki Breese Iverson, Jason Kropf, Emerson Levy, E. Werner Reschke, and Mark Owens