

Submitter: Mary Sawyers
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety
Response
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2954

April 05,2025

Chairs Kropf and Prozanski, and members of the Joint Committee on Addictions and Community Safety Response:

I write to express my strong support for HB 2954 to fund addiction prevention in every community in Oregon.

Alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs kill more than 12,000 Oregonians each year. Yet, Oregon spends only 6% of its substance use budget on prevention, most of which is earmarked only for tobacco through Ballot Measure 108. That means public health has no dedicated state funding to prevent alcohol and drug abuse.

The federal government has historically provided Oregon only \$5 million per year for prevention, money that is divided between 36 counties, nine tribes, and nine community organizations. In most counties, this is not enough to hire even one full-time prevention specialist.

The substance use crisis takes an emotional toll on people who use drugs, their families and their loved ones. It takes a financial toll on all of us, with an estimated societal and economic cost of \$6 billion per year. We cannot afford to continue on this destructive path – we need a path paved with primary prevention.

That's why I'm asking you to support HB 2954, which will allocate \$25 million per biennium so all counties and tribes can hire at least one staff person dedicated to preventing drug and alcohol use.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

Thank you,

Mary Sawyers