



February 10, 2026

Chair Reynolds and members of the committee: my name is Sarah Lochner, here with the Oregon Coalition of Local Health Officials, representing all 33 local public health departments across the state – here in support of SB 1548.

First, I want to thank Senator Reynolds for her leadership on this issue. If you missed the [presentation last session](#) on this topic, I highly recommend watching it. I've linked to it in my written testimony.

CLHO fully supports reducing access to – and warning youth about – cannabis for the following reasons: Cannabis affects:

- **Brain Development & Cognition:** Frequent use affects memory, learning, attention, and decision-making, as the teenage brain is still developing.
- **Mental Health Risks:** Early and heavy use is associated with a higher risk of developing anxiety, depression, and psychotic disorders, such as schizophrenia.
- **Addiction Potential:** Approximately 1 in 6 people who start using cannabis before age 18 can develop an addiction, or cannabis use disorder.
- **Impact of Potency:** Modern cannabis products are significantly more potent than in the past, increasing the likelihood of dependency and adverse acute reactions.
- **Academic & Social Functioning:** Research indicates a correlation between adolescent use and lower educational attainment, school absenteeism, and diminished life satisfaction.
 - This is very concerning for a number of reasons, but we know that educational attainment is the number one indicator of health – and we want everyone to live to be 93.
- **Safety Hazards:** Impaired driving and increased susceptibility to other substance use, including opioids.

When it comes to cannabis consumption, Public Health experts prioritize prevention strategies – which this bill covers in the warning labels – providing education on the risks – and stricter regulations on accessibility – to protect adolescent health.

This is a great start in the right direction. Our hope for the future is that you all will be CHAMPIONS for funding public health primary prevention programs so we can give youth the healthy coping skills they need to avoid seeking out cannabis products to begin with and to live their healthiest lives.

Please support SB 1548. Thank you.

