



# Oregon Society of Addiction Medicine

*A Chapter of American Society of Addiction Medicine*

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March 6, 2023

The Honorable Deb Patterson  
Chair  
Senate Committee on Health Care  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Oregon Society of Addiction Medicine (ORSAM)'s Support for HB 2395-A

Dear Chair Patterson,

On behalf of the Oregon Society of Addiction Medicine (ORSAM), the medical specialty society representing physicians and clinicians in Oregon specializing in the prevention and treatment of addiction, thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important topic. We write today to express our support for HB 2395-A. This bill includes several provisions that aim to reduce overdose deaths in our state. Specifically, HB 2395-A would enhance naloxone access by instituting a statewide standing order, expand Good Samaritan legal protections, exempt fentanyl test strips and other drug testing equipment from drug paraphernalia classification, and allow bulk purchases of naloxone. Taken together, we believe that these evidence-based policies would improve our response to the overdose epidemic and save lives.

Since 2019, drug overdose deaths in Oregon have been increasing at an alarming rate.<sup>i</sup> During this period, the number of overdose deaths in our state has more than doubled,<sup>ii</sup> due largely to the proliferation of the powerful synthetic opioid fentanyl in our communities and the disruptive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In turn, healthcare providers and numerous communities have sought the tools to effectively respond to this crisis. If enacted, HB 2395-A would take steps to improve the availability of vital tools that are proven to reduce overdose deaths, including the lifesaving opioid reversal drug naloxone. The bill would also legalize drug testing equipment like fentanyl test strips. Further, HB 2395-A would strengthen legal protections for those responding to an overdose, signaling that overdose prevention is a community-wide endeavor. We believe that Oregon should not punish people for attempting to survive.

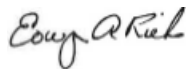
The provisions of HB 2395-A are evidence-based. They are proven to reduce harms associated with opioid use and substance use more generally. Naloxone is a safe and effective opioid antagonist. The benefits of expanding access to naloxone are well documented. For example, one study observed that states which enacted naloxone access legislation experienced a 14% decrease in overdose deaths.<sup>iii</sup> HB 2395-A would enhance the distribution of naloxone by allowing the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to establish a statewide standing order. Additionally, the bill would direct OHA to bulk purchase naloxone for distribution to first responders, hospitals, and treatment programs.

Fentanyl test strips may reduce drug overdoses in some situations and they may increase concern about the drug supply among those who use them. People who use drugs should not suffer additional harms from criminal charges related to any equipment associated with drug use.

They are doing the best they can to attempt to survive an increasingly fatal synthetic drug market. These tests are associated with positive changes in drug use behavior and desire to seek treatment.<sup>iv</sup> <sup>v</sup> Oregon ought to end criminal charges for fentanyl test strips, other drug testing equipment, and all drug paraphernalia to help our state mitigate the harms of the overdose epidemic.

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to share our perspective about this important legislation. **We urge members of this committee to favorably report HB 2395-A and support its enactment moving forward.** Please do not hesitate to contact [eowyn.rieke@gmail.com](mailto:eowyn.rieke@gmail.com) if our organization can provide assistance in the future.

Sincerely,



Eowyn Rieke, MD, FASAM  
President, Oregon Society of Addiction Medicine



Moxie Loeffler, DO, MPH, FASAM  
Policy Chair and Past President, Oregon Society of Addiction Medicine

CC: The Honorable Cedric Hayden  
The Honorable Daniel Bonham  
The Honorable Winsvey Campos  
The Honorable Chris Gorsek

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<sup>i</sup> Oregon Health Authority. (2022). Opioid Overdose Public Health Surveillance Update Dec 21st, 2022. [https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/PREVENTIONWELLNESS/SUBSTANCEUSE/OPIOIDS/Documents/monthly\\_opioid\\_overdose\\_related\\_data\\_report.pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/PREVENTIONWELLNESS/SUBSTANCEUSE/OPIOIDS/Documents/monthly_opioid_overdose_related_data_report.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> Oregon Health Authority. (2022). Fentanyl-driven overdoses sharply increasing throughout Oregon. Oregon Health Authority and Oregon Department of Human Services. <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/ORDHS/bulletins/31f9c54>

<sup>iii</sup> McClellan, C., Lambdin, B. H., Ali, M. M., Mutter, R., Davis, C. S., Wheeler, E., Pemberton, M., & Kral, A. H. (2018). Opioid-overdose laws association with opioid use and overdose mortality. Addictive Behaviors, 86, 90–95. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2018.03.014>

<sup>iv</sup> Peiper, N. C., Clarke, S. D., Vincent, L. B., Ciccarone, D., Kral, A. H., & Zibbell, J. E. (2019). Fentanyl test strips as an opioid overdose prevention strategy: Findings from a Syringe Services Program in the Southeastern United States. International Journal of Drug Policy, 63, 122–128. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2018.08.007>

<sup>v</sup> Krieger, M. S., Goedel, W. C., Buxton, J. A., Lysyshyn, M., Bernstein, E., Sherman, S. G., Rich, J. D., Hadland, S. E., Green, T. C., & Marshall, B. D. L. (2018). Use of rapid fentanyl test strips among young adults who use drugs. International Journal of Drug Policy, 61, 52–58. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2018.09.009>