



Press Release
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Bipartisan Opioid Harm Reduction Package Passes out of House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

SALEM, Ore. — Today, [House Bill 2395](#), introduced and championed by [Representative Maxine Dexter](#) (D-Portland), with its bipartisan -6 amendment, passed out of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care. The bill seeks to reduce barriers to harm reduction in response to the opioid and illicit fentanyl crisis gripping Oregon’s communities. In 2021 over 745 Oregonians died from opioid overdoses, and nearly three Oregonians a day die from this tragic and growing epidemic across the entire state.

“It is impossible to ignore the profoundly tragic impact illicitly-manufactured fentanyl is having across Oregon,” said Dexter, a board-certified physician and State Representative for Northwest and Downtown Portland, Linnton and Cathedral Park during the bill’s [public hearing](#). “Our responsibility, as elected leaders, is to ensure the health and safety of Oregonians. This package is an opportunity to urgently take data-driven action that will start saving lives almost immediately upon passage.”

HB 2395 is the result of a bipartisan coalition and has earned the support of harm reduction advocates, law enforcement, clinicians, students, educators, local governments and our public health system. The bill combines previously introduced legislation into an omnibus harm reduction package focused on increasing access to overdose reversal medication and on the ground prevention, improving overdose data, and modernizing Oregon’s harm reduction statutes.

“People are dying in escalating numbers because fentanyl is killing them,” said Multnomah County Commissioner and Emergency Physician Sharon Meieran. “[...] This package can be the state’s defibrillator to save lives now, reduce suffering, reduce hospitalization, and give Oregonians from all corners of the state a chance at recovery.”

“Protecting Oregonians, maintaining safe communities and ensuring quality of life for Oregonians is the primary objective for Oregon’s public safety professionals,” testified the Oregon State Sheriffs’ Association, the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police, and the Oregon District Attorney’s Association. “The Opioid Harm Reduction Policy Package takes important steps to address barriers to harm reduction efforts with a focus on saving lives.”

“College students are directly engaged in the opioid and fentanyl crisis” said Kavi Shrestha, University of Oregon Study Body Vice President “[...] People should not lose their lives for making a mistake.”

HB 2395 has received support from the Oregon Department of Justice, Oregon Nurses Association, Kaiser Permanente, Oregon Council for Behavioral Health, Oregon Medical Association, Oregon Society of Addiction Medicine, Oregon Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians, Oregon Society of Addiction Medicine, Oregon Chiropractic Association, Outside In, Oregon State Firefighters Council, Oregon Fire Chiefs Association, Portland Public Schools, Beaverton School District, Oregon Student Association, Associated Students of University of Oregon, Multnomah County, Association of Oregon Counties, Multnomah County District Attorney's Office, Lane County, Association of Oregon Counties and more.

The bill is co-sponsored by Representatives Bynum, Grayber, Hieb, Reynolds, Bowman, Chaichi, Evans, Gamba, Hartman, Holvey, Javadi, Marsh, Nelson, Nosse, Pham H, Pham K, Ruiz, Tran, and Walters, and passed out of the committee with a 10-0-1 vote.

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