



# PRESS RELEASE

OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

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For More Information, Contact:  
Scott Moore: 503-986-1904

## **Oregon House Takes on Opiate Addiction Crisis**

*House Bill 3440 passes unanimously*

SALEM – As Oregon and the nation deal with the ever-expanding opiate addiction crisis that is destroying lives and communities, the Oregon House of Representatives today passed [House Bill 3440](#) as one component of the state’s approach to dealing with the crisis.

Since 1999, Oregon’s death rate from opiates has more than tripled, and since 2010, fatal drug overdoses have exceeded statewide deaths from auto accidents.

**Rep. Jennifer Williamson (D-NW & SW Portland)** joined a number of other legislators in sponsoring the legislation. She has been working on the issue since entering the legislature in 2013.

“Though it pains me to see the effects of this addiction on our state, I am heartened at the work being done to address and stem the tide of this terrible epidemic,” Rep. Williamson said. “We often talk about there being an urban, rural divide on many issues in Oregon but on this, there is no divide.”

Overdose deaths are pervasive in every corner of Oregon with the highest recorded rates in Tillamook, Clatsop, Lincoln, Multnomah, Linn, Lane, Douglas, Jackson, Josephine, Crook, Malheur, Baker, and Harney Counties.

HB 3440 will help prevent fatal overdoses by:

- Eliminating barriers to more widespread availability of the life-saving antidote Naloxone, sometimes known as the Lazarus drug;
- Eliminating insurance barriers to relief;
- Ensuring offenders supervised by drug courts will be able to continue their recovery treatment even if it includes methadone or buprenorphine.

The bill also requires the Oregon Health Authority to report fatal and non-fatal overdoses by county every quarter so progress can be monitored and to modernize the inventory of opiate treatment options so providers and, most importantly, victims of addiction can take the vital first step toward recovery of looking for help.

“Over the past several sessions the Oregon House has worked hard on legislation to address the opioid crisis here in Oregon,” said **Rep. Caddy McKeown (D-Coos Bay)**, a sponsor of HB 3440. “Too many lives are being affected around the state.”

With the addition of language from House Bill 2518, the state's prescription drug monitoring database will begin to capture the amount of naloxone dispensed, allow hospital systems to comprehensively monitor their contribution to excess opioid prescribing, and will finally use the system to direct educational effort to those healthcare providers who do not follow safe prescribing practices.

The legislation comes as Gov. Kate Brown is convening a task force to tackle the many challenges of the opiate crisis.

House Bill 3440, which passed 57-0, now goes to the Oregon Senate for consideration.

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