



Oregon Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission

To: ADPC Members

From: The ADPC Prevention Committee

Re: Committee Priorities for the 2026-2030 Comprehensive Plan

Background/Mission of the Prevention Committee

The ADPC Prevention Committee collaborates closely with ADPC staff and other partners to prevent and reduce substance use disorder and related harms in Oregon. The committee defines prevention as “practices, programs, and policies designed to prevent and reduce the incidence and prevalence of alcohol and other drug use and consequent health, behavioral health, and social problems (National Academy of Medicine (NAM) - formerly Institute of Medicine).” To achieve this, the committee is focused on developing, implementing, and maintaining trauma-informed, community-embedded, and culturally responsive prevention strategies to grow a statewide, comprehensive approach for prevention programs, policies, and systems change. The committee is dedicated to fostering intentional and authentic ongoing community engagement to inform the committee’s practices and priorities through developing strong collaborations and sustained partnerships.

Comprehensive Plan Priorities

The Prevention Committee proposes to reduce the prevalence of substance use disorders, reduce substance use-related deaths, and reduce substance use-related disparities and inequities by focusing on the following priorities:

1. Strengthen regulatory and fiscal strategies that bolster primary prevention services.

Primary prevention focuses on preventing the onset of substance use disorders across the lifespan. Primary prevention services can occur at three levels, as defined by the National Academy of Medicine:

- a. Universal Prevention – Strategies that are directed at the entire population. Examples include public awareness and education strategies, universal screening for substance use among youth, and policies regulating the availability and marketing of substances (e.g., pricing, licensing, outlet density restrictions).
- b. Selected Prevention – Strategies aimed at populations that are at higher risk, such as youth in foster care, parents of youth impacted by substance use, and communities experiencing systemic barriers to health care, including LGBTQIA+ youth and racialized communities. Examples could include culturally tailored youth development programs, mentorship opportunities, peer support, and inclusive spaces for youth to connect with trusted adults, and access to culturally relevant resources.
- c. Indicated Prevention – Interventions for individuals showing signs of substance misuse but without a diagnosed disorder. Examples of indicated prevention strategies may include pre-justice engagement programs, community-based intervention programs, youth and family support, or brief intervention/school-based early intervention for youth who self-identify as misusing substances.

With this priority, the Prevention Committee affirms this definition. It proposes expanding equitable access to primary prevention services across the lifespan, ensuring resources are leveraged to fill service gaps, and supporting the expansion of programs, policies, and strategies that align with best practices in primary prevention. These efforts will strengthen coordination across systems that support youth and families, ensuring more consistent and

aligned prevention delivery. Addressing fiscal and regulatory opportunities will further increase the capacity and sustainability of evidence-based primary prevention strategies.

2. **Establish a Prevention Center of Excellence to expand the implementation of best practices and support the growth of the primary prevention workforce.** Schools, Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), and local leaders are more likely to adopt evidence-based practices when provided with technical assistance, capacity-building resources, culturally specific implementation support, and access to equity-driven data and evaluation expertise that help them respond to emerging needs. In addition, Oregon faces a significant workforce shortage of Certified Prevention Specialists. Several states have created technical assistance and resource centers to provide low-cost support to partners committed to expanding primary prevention services. This center would serve as a one-stop shop, providing partners with access to data, evaluation tools, training, and culturally responsive technical assistance to strengthen data-driven decision-making, enhance program effectiveness, and support a diverse prevention workforce. The Prevention Committee views the development of a center as a foundational step needed to expand access to culturally preferred and evidence-based primary prevention services in Oregon while also strengthening the prevention workforce and supporting existing organizations and partners.
3. **Expand access to primary prevention activities in K-12 schools.** Schools play a critical role in promoting youth wellbeing and are at the forefront of mental health promotion, suicide, and substance use prevention efforts. Despite significant efforts across schools, sixty percent of Oregon schools do not use evidence-based prevention curricula or programs¹. Reducing risk among Oregon youth requires a sustained, comprehensive approach to school-based policies, programs, and practices that promote well-being and

¹ <https://www.thelundreport.org/content/most-oregon-kids-dont-get-science-backed-drug-prevention>

enable early intervention for those at heightened risk of substance misuse and its consequences.

The Prevention Committee is committed to collaborating with school districts, state agencies, community partners, and policymakers to increase the availability and use of evidence-based, culturally responsive prevention programs in schools. This includes advocating for sustained funding, technical assistance and professional development opportunities, and accountability structures to ensure every student in Oregon has access to effective, developmentally appropriate prevention services.

4. Expand access to primary prevention programs and strategies on college campuses.

While prevention efforts often center on K–12 settings, colleges, community colleges and other postsecondary education and training institutions are uniquely positioned to address the needs of young adults navigating increased independence, stress, and exposure to substance use. In parallel with the growth of collegiate recovery programs, strengthening prevention on campuses can reduce risk, delay initiation, and support healthier transitions into adulthood. The Prevention Committee will work to increase access to evidence-based and culturally responsive prevention strategies across Oregon’s diverse postsecondary institutions, supporting student well-being and long-term success.

5. Expand community-based prevention efforts focused on children, transition-aged youth/young adults, and families. Prevention programs focus on strengthening family relationships and enhancing social-emotional well-being for children, youth, and families. While K-12 schools and colleges play a key role, a holistic, community-driven approach is essential to addressing known root causes, reducing risk, and promoting lifelong well-being. Supporting families from prenatal stages through early childhood is critical, as these practices reduce long-term substance use risk. Prevention strategies

must address the needs of transition-aged youth, including those in the workforce, ensuring comprehensive support beyond traditional academic settings. At the same time, prevention efforts must recognize and respond to broader environmental factors, including the ease of access to alcohol and the increasing normalization and widespread marketing of marijuana and other substances. The Prevention Committee will collaborate with local leaders, youth, and family-serving organizations to build prevention-prepared communities. This includes developing comprehensive strategies to address root causes, expanding evidence-based knowledge of substance use disorders, and promoting actions that reduce youth exposure and access to substances.

Outcomes Anticipated

The Prevention Committee believes these priority areas will strengthen Oregon's capacity to build prevention-prepared communities, expand access to effective and culturally appropriate prevention strategies, and create the conditions necessary for meaningful reductions in substance use and related harms among youth and across the lifespan. By aligning efforts across sectors and centering equity, these strategies will reduce disparities and foster lasting improvements in health, well-being, and opportunity for all Oregonians.