

Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide
Lethal Means Safety Subcommittee Meeting Agenda & Action Planning

Date & Time: August 13, 2025 * 1:00 PM – 2:15 PM

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89796541408?pwd=OGpPRVArcDhTS1MzWml3YUhaZHV3dz09>

Subcommittee Voting Members in Attendance: Co-Chair Kelie McWilliams,
Gordon Clay, Mike James

Subcommittee Voting Members not in Attendance: Co-Chair Pam Pearce

Subcommittee Non-Voting Members: Meghan Crane, Steven Schneider

Staff: Jenn Fraga

Guests: Lee Stewart

Subcommittee Decision Making: A quorum is defined as three voting members of the Alliance, and must include a Subcommittee Chair or Co-chair. Decisions will be made by majority vote of the total number of members on that Subcommittee that are present. Any member may submit motions for vote to the Subcommittee and at quarterly meetings.

Quick Recap: The meeting began with introductions and updates, including discussions about upcoming focus groups and policy recommendations for the 2027 legislative session. The meeting focused heavily on cannabis use, particularly its impact on youth and mental health, with plans to develop educational initiatives and conduct focus groups to inform future recommendations for the Oregon Health Authority.

Agenda Item: Announcements

Notes: The meeting began with introductions and updates, including Jenn's announcement of upcoming focus group sign-ups and Lee's presentation on substance use, particularly regarding weed, scheduled for September. The group discussed policy recommendations for the 2027 legislative session, with Lee set to provide insights on substance use.

Agenda Item: Cannabis and Youth Suicide Concerns

Notes: Lee shared concerns about the increasing link between cannabis use, particularly among young people, and suicide risk, highlighting how stronger cannabis strains are affecting brain development and mental health. Lee will present more details in September. Donna-Marie and others agreed that more attention should be given to this issue, acknowledging the complexity of addressing it due to state revenue from cannabis sales, and expressed support for developing recommendations to the Oregon Health Authority.

The group discussed the need for educational initiatives around cannabis use, particularly focusing on its impact on teenagers and mental health. Lee shared experiences with cannabis-related medical visits and emphasized the importance of raising awareness about its potential risks. Jenn highlighted challenges in discussing cannabis with clients and suggested developing educational materials for both the public and healthcare providers. Lee mentioned existing campaigns like "Let's Talk Cannabis" and stressed the growing need for such initiatives as more people become aware of cannabis-related issues.

The group discussed the need for educational initiatives around cannabis use, particularly focusing on youth and harm reduction. Keli suggested

depersonalizing the conversation to help people recognize signs of cannabis-related issues in others, while Donna-Marie emphasized the importance of changing the narrative around cannabis being safe and legal. The participants agreed that educational materials for providers could be a good starting point, with Lee mentioning a conversation guide from Clackamas County. Mike shared information on Cannabis Hyperemesis Syndrome, highlighting the increasing prevalence of such cases, especially among young users.

The group discussed conducting focus groups with youth and young adults about cannabis use to inform education and messaging recommendations. Jenn proposed this as a potential project for the subcommittee, suggesting it could overlap with several other subcommittees' work. Gordon emphasized the importance of presenting this as a standalone initiative to OHA, rather than tied to specific legislation, and highlighted the need for data and evaluation. The group agreed to consider this as a recommendation area for OHA and a charge for the subcommittee, with plans to work with different subcommittees to shape the focus groups throughout the year.

Action:

- Subcommittee: Develop a recommendation to OHA regarding cannabis education and awareness and its impacts.
- Jenn: Coordinate with OHA to find out what marijuana education initiatives they already have planned to avoid duplication of efforts.
- Subcommittee: Coordinate with other Alliance workgroups to develop focus groups on cannabis use among youth.
- Subcommittee: Develop specific recommendations around messaging and education about cannabis use based on focus group findings.

Agenda Item: Policy Recommendations

Notes: The group discussed efforts to pass legislation allowing Federal Firearms Licensees (FFLs) to provide off-site storage for firearms, which has been unsuccessful in previous legislative sessions. Donna-Marie emphasized the evidence-based benefits of such laws in reducing firearm deaths by suicide and proposed involving veterans and FFLs as champions for the legislation, potentially with media attention to increase success. The group identified the need for a new legislative champion while acknowledging the challenge of finding someone who can effectively navigate this controversial issue.

The group discussed ERPO (Extreme Risk Protection Order) education and training initiatives in Oregon, led by Steve who shared details about ongoing work with DPSST, OHSU, and Johns Hopkins to develop asynchronous training modules for law enforcement and healthcare providers. Steve explained that ERPOs are civil orders intended to prevent imminent threats of harm with deadly weapons, with an estimated 1-in-15 cases resulting in a life saved, and noted that current discussions are underway about expanding who can petition for ERPOs beyond household members and law enforcement. The group agreed to review legislative recommendations at their next meeting on September 10th, with Jenn planning to draft language for review.

Action:

- Donna-Marie: Continue work on launching the Oregon Armory initiative with FFLs and veterans.
- Subcommittee: Continue advocacy for limited liability law for FFLs to encourage off-site firearm storage.
- Jenn: Draft language for legislative recommendations, including the limited liability law for FFLs, to be reviewed at the September 10th meeting.
- Subcommittee: Identify new legislative champions for the limited liability law for FFLs.