

Judiciary Committee - Public Comment Session in Support of HB 4040 Wednesday, Feb 5, 2020 at 1 pm.

My name is Teri Morgan and I am a Lane County resident, currently living and working in Springfield. I am a CADCI, and the Program Coordinator of Springfield Treatment Center, a facility that provides Medically Assisted Recovery to individuals struggling with Opioid Addiction that also offers a Matrix Model IOP program to address the rampant co-occurring methamphetamine use of our clients. I am also a Steering Committee member of Oregon Recovers. I would like to thank the Judiciary Committee for hearing me today. Over the last year, I have been working with Oregon Recovers and my city and county to create and adopt resolutions declaring addiction a public health crisis, along with working as a Community Advocate to educate and bring awareness to the addiction crisis and to break the stigma of addiction and recovery by showing that Oregonians Do Recover if given the treatment services and programs they so desperately need.

Oregon sees more than 2100 deaths a year due to alcohol and drug related causes, and I am here to speak for those people who lost their battle to the disease of addiction. Those numbers are miniscule compared to the actual numbers of people who are struggling with active addiction to alcohol and drugs at this moment in our communities, as we have limited access to treatment and services which support ongoing recovery. I do prevention talks at local High Schools, and ask classes of 30+ students this question: "Who in here knows someone whose life has been affected by drugs and/or alcohol?" Nearly EVERY hand of EVERY child in the room goes up. Addiction is pervasive, chronic and it touches everyone in this community. We are in a state of emergency and we need immediate action to address this.

Nearly 7 years ago, I was a homeless drug addict, actively committing crimes to support my drug habit, so sick and malnourished that I could barely function. I was estranged from my adult children and my youngest daughter, 9 years old at the time, was ultimately placed in Foster Care after years of suffering through my addiction, trauma, homelessness and dysfunction. Even despite referral and recommendation to enter into treatment from DHS and the courts, I had to fight for a spot in our overcrowded residential treatment facility, by calling weekly for months on end. After about 3 months of waiting for a spot to open, I clearly remember calling my DHS case worker in tears, begging her to help me, saying "I don't care where you send me. I will go anywhere, but if you don't get me there RIGHT NOW, I am going to die."

Once I entered treatment and got the services and support I needed, I was able to quit using and have remained clean ever since. With no recovery support services available after treatment, I had to fight for a place to live, I had to fight to regain employment, and I had to fight to have my daughter returned from foster care, and 7 years later, I am still fighting to repair the damage from my active drug use. I will not give up, as I continue to fight for others in this state to have the opportunity to get clean and stay clean. We Do Recover, and legislation such as HB 4040 is a great start to address the addiction crisis in this state by offering comprehensive programs to help support families throughout the entire process of treatment and ongoing recovery. If I did not have the help and support of DHS and the judge in charge of my child welfare case, I wouldn't be here. DHS involvement was a blessing to me and my family for which I will be forever grateful, and HB 4040 can help provide this to countless families across this state.