

Testimony Regarding Measure 110

I am Dr Willy Foster. I practice Emergency Medicine in Florence Oregon. I am also involved with a number of free clinics and street medicine programs that serve the unhoused and other marginalized populations in Eugene and Springfield.

In my 30 years of medical practice I have seen far too much of the damaged and ruined lives that addiction causes. And frustration seemed to be the only response I had to this problem as real resources to address the issue have been so drastically absent.

I now have hope that things will change with the recent passage of Measure 110.

I am excited that we as a society are beginning to see addiction as a health issue and not as a moral weakness or a bad choice. Addiction is a treatable medical condition that requires attentive and compassionate treatment and support.

I am excited that Measure 110 provides the funding to begin to address the treatment of addiction. There are many proven approaches we can do to help those with addiction from medications, to counseling, to wrap around social services that can take people from addiction and often a marginal life on the streets to recovery and a productive healthy life.

Currently when I see someone in the Emergency Department or at a street clinic who is struggling with addiction - yet wants to help, who wants to quit, who is ready to change - all I can offer them is a phone number for them to call where they will be told that there is long waiting list to get into a recovery program. Faced with such a wait it is no surprise that most lose hope and continue in their downward spiral of addiction.

With the passage of Measure 110 I soon hope to be able to offer the patient with addiction a dose of Suboxone in the ED or street clinic and a warm hand off to a recovery program which will be able to see them that day or the next and get them plugged into a ongoing program.

I am grateful that these committees and the legislature are working on implementing Measure 110.

I thank you as a medical provider who is on the front line of addiction and I thank you for the many patients I see who struggle with addiction yet look for answers and help and have hope a better future.