

Addiction is an urgent matter of health and wellness. Addiction is a health condition. Much like diabetes and heart disease, it requires attentive and compassionate treatment and support. Addiction treatment is as successful as treatment for other chronic conditions, such as hypertension or asthma.

Treating drug use like a crime has created suffering that spans generations. For far too long, we have responded to drugs with arrests and prison beds, disproportionately impacting and stigmatizing Black, Indigenous and Latinx communities. Treatment is a key component of M110 that cannot be delayed.

Halting drug arrests is only the beginning. Our treatment system is chronically fractured and underfunded — leading to preventable suffering and loss. I'm calling on the Oregon Legislature to honor voters' wishes and invest in treatment.

We have an opportunity to stand up for Oregon's values of racial equity, justice and healing. We can revitalize communities, keep families whole and open up economic opportunities. We understand Oregon faces many challenges. Each one will require thoughtful consideration by our leaders. But people experiencing substance use disorder — and their loved ones — can't afford to wait 18 months.