



Good morning Chair Lively, Vice-Chairs Cate and Kropf, and members of the Committee

My name is Tera Hurst; I'm testifying today on behalf of the Health Justice Recovery Alliance. We represent more than 75 community-based organizations across the state with deep knowledge and experience working to serve and strengthen local communities. Members include culturally-specific organizations, labor, harm reduction and addiction recovery providers, advocates, medical associations and people in recovery. I am also a person in long term recovery.

Our work is centered on the implementation of Measure 110, the Drug Addiction Treatment & Recovery Act. We're focused on investing in the communities most harmed by the war on drugs — Black, Latinx, Native, Indigenous, and tribal communities. People of color and low-income Oregonians continue to be disproportionately harmed by Oregon's failed approach to addiction; they are overrepresented in the criminal justice system and underrepresented in the healthcare system.

I am here this morning to testify in opposition to the adoption of the -3 amendments to HB 4016. We are not opposed to the substance of the amendment; we are fully opposed to its funding source because it would reduce access to critical harm reduction and addiction recovery services. This amendment would remove \$29 million from the Treatment & Recovery Fund, which pays for the lifesaving services provided through Measure 110. As a point of reference: in just six months that same amount of money has helped over 16,000 people across Oregon access behavioral healthcare, peer support, housing, and harm reduction interventions.

Yesterday marked the one year anniversary where Oregon became the first state to decriminalize possession of small amounts of drugs through Measure 110. In its first year the law has prevented *thousands* of harmful arrests while expanding access to critical harm reduction and addiction recovery services for all Oregonians — especially those most targeted by the racist war on drugs.

PAUSE

It was only 14 months ago when voters voted to invest in a health-first approach to addiction and to move us away from a criminal justice approach. I am so disappointed to see this effort that would reverse the will of the voters 14 months later. And not even give us a chance to build the system Oregon so desperately needs. We are 50th in the nation in access to services 50th –when you get a failing grade you don't pull back you double down.

Many of the incredible providers I work with couldn't come today because the amendment wasn't posted until yesterday morning and they can't rearrange their lives so quickly. Many believed that when the voters vote it is the law. Many are too busy trying to save lives with very little support. But the ones that truly broke my heart when I talked to them yesterday about this proposal are the folks who are just too tired of begging for their government to care about their community. The communities that have been destroyed by the war on drugs. And they just couldn't face this committee and have to beg yet again for life-saving funds, funds that the voters voted for just 14 months ago.

In its first six months, Measure 110 has helped more than 16,000 people. Next month, \$270 million *more* is slated to be invested in increased access to lifesaving services that include housing, peer support, harm reduction, overdose prevention and low-barrier recovery treatment services in every Oregon County, from Benton County to Baker County and everywhere in between. They need stable and sustainable funding to build the system of care Oregon needs.

This is the absolute WRONG time to make cuts to behavioral health services; we cannot take steps backwards from the voter-approved commitment to invest in treatment and behavioral health services. The Measure 110 Oversight and Accountability Council (OAC) has not even gotten full funding out the door to community organizations, and seeing legislators support any bills that would cut this funding is devastating and in direct conflict with what Oregonians voted for when they passed Measure 110 by a 17-point margin.

The Measure 110 Oversight & Accountability Council received applications asking for nearly \$390 million to support the formation of Behavioral Health Resource Networks (BHRNs), which will provide access to low-barrier addiction recovery services in every Oregon County. The amount of funds requested by local addiction recovery service providers is about \$110 million *more* than the OAC had available to issue to grantees.

To think about cutting these funds even further is when we already can't meet the existing need will mean the loss of lives.

With overdose deaths on the rise across the country, and new data from SAMHSA showing Oregon ranks second in the nation for substance use disorder and 50th in addiction and recovery services, the need to continue to fully fund Measure 110 services could not be more urgent.

We must uphold Measure 110 and ensure that all Oregonians have access to harm reduction and addiction recovery services. There is no shortage of demands on behavioral health and community-based providers to respond to this growing behavioral health crisis. The pandemic has exacerbated the lack of stable investment in our existing system of response. Please do not create more uncertainty by passing amendments like this one. Showing more lack of commitment to behavioral health is so out of step with the demands from the community, and even demands from elected leadership on providers.

Again, I can't stress enough, the funding for Measure 110 services hasn't even been fully deployed. The science shows us, and the voters agreed, that we need a health-first approach. We can't make that happen if there is a lack of commitment to dedicate the funding to make Oregon voters' vision a reality. Please do not adopt the -3 amendments to HB 4016.