

Oregon Legislature  
Joint Interim Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Dear elected leaders,

Oregon has a severe shortage of effective treatment for substance disorder. This is according to OHSU Oregon Substance Use Disorder Services Inventory & Gap Analysis. Specifically:

-

There is a 49% gap between the amount of substance disorder treatment that is needed and what is currently available.

-

This is born out by front line service providers, half of whom say they do not have capacity to meet demand.

-

There is an estimated 51% gap in healthcare providers authorized to prescribe buprenorphine, a life-saving medicine to help treat opioid addiction.

-

Statewide gaps in equity and access included insufficient provision of culturally relevant service to protected classes, language interpretation and translation services, and a workforce that does not represent the demographics of the state.

-

The situation is particularly dire for people living outside without stable housing, who face long lines and waitlists for detox services and an acute lack of recovery or transitional housing, resulting in cycles of despair.

Against this background, calls for more arrests, jails, prisons and general law-and-order are not addressing root cause, at best, and expensively sweeping the problem out of sight out of mind, at worst.

Please prioritize treatment over prisons, and do it with urgency.

Thank you.

Au Nguyen Portland, OR 97214