

Chairs Lieber and Kropf and members of the Joint Interim Committee on Addiction and Community Safety Response

I am reaching out to you to call for real solutions, real safety, and real healing when it comes to addressing the overdose and addiction crisis we are facing in Oregon. I am a Nurse Practitioner in Southern Oregon who works for La Clinica. I have spent years on our mobile unit caring for patients struggling with Substance Use Disorder. It has been extremely hard to provide care for patients with SUD due to lack of local treatment options and the repercussions of criminalizing this medical condition. Individuals are traumatized and stigmatized, with lapses in medical care during incarceration and inadequate resources for rehabilitation when released. Criminal records take away future work and housing options with a lingering impact on individuals and their families forcing many of them to become homeless.

The common belief that there has been an increase in deaths from fentanyl use related to decriminalization in Oregon is not supported by data. A study published in the Journal of American Medical Association this year concluded that there was no statistical significance between monthly death rates from fentanyl in Oregon after Measure 110 compared with the other 49 states. We need to be cautious changing course with substance use based on limited information. There are many social issues affecting substance use behavior.

Measure 110 has provided an opportunity to expand a variety of services including harm reduction, recovery, and housing across the state. Addiction services have grown 44% in the first six months of full funding from Measure 110. I meet patients who are waiting for their opportunity to go into recovery. They are motivated to change as they see the possibility for change with new and expanding programs in their community. I truly hope we will not pull the rug out from under them. Let's be patient and build appropriate services across Oregon so all patients in this state can access them easily and trust them to be comprehensive, including harm reduction, withdrawal support, and recovery. This is a difficult journey and one that needs to support all seeking services regardless of race, sex, age, or medical/mental health conditions. These folks need Trauma- Informed care from health professionals and peer support, not police officers, jails, and courtrooms.

Sincerely,
Lauri Hoagland
lauri7757@aol.com, Ashland, OR