

Co-Chairs Lieber and Kropf, and Members of the Joint Interim Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response,

Monday's hearing confirmed that our communities need real solutions, real safety, and real healing when it comes to addressing the overdose and addiction crisis.

I am submitting a public comment to show support for rapidly expanding treatment services in Oregon. As you heard on Monday, the lack of a full continuum of care is a root cause for the problem in our state and people, communities, and families across our state cannot wait any longer.

I was an early and reluctant supporter of M110, not because I didn't believe in decriminalization (I do) but because there weren't dedicated funds to simply increasing pay/reimbursement for providers and thus increasing access to all kinds of addiction treatment. We are woefully underresourced in this regard. Also, I had little faith in Oregon smoothly and efficiently rolling out a new program and process.

I'm not sure why... but so many health system responses are broken. Is this an OHA issue? A classic example was the failed rollout of the state insurance exchange (i.e. Oracle debacle after passage of the Affordable Care Act).

The situation is urgent and we need action. We finally have some of the mechanisms, people, committees, etc. in place and we need to let those programs, funding, and process work out. We need to be patient AND we can make some tweaks to M110. We need effective solutions that can be done now to bring healing, not harm, to Black and Brown Oregonians, the people harmed the most by the failed war on drugs, as well as rural communities and people experiencing homelessness.

I'm submitting a public comment because I believe our leaders need to do more - and fast - to address the addiction crisis across our state.

We need:

- Housing
- Treatment services of all kinds
- More peer supports
- Street outreach and non-police emergency response to get people connected to care
- No going backwards to recriminalizing addiction and not returning to the harmful war on drugs that disproportionately harmed Black and Brown Oregonians

Recriminalization is a red herring and controversial and divisive proposals to repeal Measure 110 are not the answer. We can't arrest our way out of this. Nothing will change without more and better treatment options.

I urge you to listen to the addiction experts and people with lived experience. #1 priority is seeing that addiction treatment is funded and compensated to match medical and other mental health care. We need better reimbursement of agencies, providers, and staff to attract and the workforce we need. We need more inpatient treatment programs, so that there are NO waiting lists. When someone gets an assessment or has that "moment of clarity" for 5 minutes and reaches out for help - they should get a full assessment and then be matched to accessible, local, culturally appropriate, clinically appropriate (ASAM level of care) TREATMENT! For as many times as it takes!

Our communities are counting on you to do the right thing.

Sincerely,

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