

My name is Joseph Westover, I'm here today to urge the legislature to fund case managers and peer mentors in the community, not to recriminalize drugs. I'm a public defender, and I supervise the case management team at the Multnomah County office at the Metropolitan Public Defender. I have seen the extraordinary work that case managers are able to do for our clients.

Law enforcement is not the appropriate entry point for M110 referrals. In the 24 months between 2018 and 2019, officers in Multnomah County (with a population of 803k) arrested 1448 people for PCS, that's 60 per month. However, in the 30 months from February 2021 to August of 2023, Multnomah County Officers issued 930 citations for PCS, 31 per month.

In that same period of time, Clackamas County, which has a population of 422k, only issued 117 referrals. Washington County has 600k people, yet only 79 referrals issued.

The fact is, police are not interacting with the full population of people who need treatment services. Police are prioritizing people who they suspect are committing crimes and deprioritizing people who may need a referral.

On the other hand, Case managers will prioritize referrals by building trusting, ongoing relationships with those they're charged to assist. They address the individual needs of the client by connecting them not just to drug treatment, but also to mental health resources, housing resources, family resources, and assist in accessing other benefits.

Putting case managers on the street *will* produce more buy in from the individuals m110 intended to help. Thank you.

Joseph Westover