

I write today as the father of a young man who became addicted to heroin in his early 20s. Our son started out with Marijuana, and then graduated to Cocaine, as several of his friends were doing. To go from those two addictive drugs, it was an easy step for him to “move up” to Heroin, to which he soon became addicted. His mother and I, who adopted him as a new-born, did not know that he was doing “hard drugs,” but we did know that he had an addictive personality, and suffered from ADHD and Bipolar Disorder. We later learned that both of his birth parents were regular drug users.

One morning, our son called us and said he needed help, and asked us to come right over to his apartment. He sounded terrible. When we got there, he was catatonic, and incoherent. The rug on the floor had several used needles, and we got to work picking them up (we later disposed of them, being careful to follow state guidelines...his mother is a Registered Nurse).

Fortunately, a friend of ours was a psycho-pharmacologist of rare ability, and he knew our son personally. We called him and explained the situation. With just a few phone calls, he was able to reserve that rarest of things, a bed in a highly qualified drug rehabilitation hospital. We drove our son immediately to the hospital, where he stayed for three weeks of intense therapy. We had tried behavioral therapy several times before, but with uniformly disappointing results. But this time, the treatment was successful.

That was 15 years ago, and I am thrilled to report that our son has never relapsed!! The odds of that happening are very slim, well under five percent, but he made it work. Now, thanks to our son’s strong will to live and the remarkably effective therapy he went through, he remains drug-free, and I am happy to report that he has a family of his own.

My wife and I voted against the original passage of BM 110, and think it has been one of the worst pieces of legislation in Oregon history. As reported in the DAILY MAIL issue of November 21, 2023, Oregon’s overdose-related deaths have skyrocketed to 955 so far this year, compared to 280 three years ago when the state decriminalized hard drugs like heroin, meth, and cocaine. Drugs like Marijuana are known gateway drugs, and are far more powerful than they were when we were young. The same can be said of Cocaine.

I urge you to repeal BM 110 in its entirety, and restore legal liability to drug usage.

Melvin W. Ellis