

ANALYSIS

Item 26: Department of Corrections Substance Use Disorder Pilot

Analyst: John Terpening

Request: Acknowledge receipt of a report on the status of implementation of a substance use disorder pilot program, operation of two K-9 units, and wastewater testing in corrections institutions.

Analysis: The Department of Corrections (DOC) has submitted a third report pursuant to a budget note approved in the budget report for SB 5504 (2023). The first report was provided to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Public Safety Subcommittee during the 2024 session, and the second report was provided to the Emergency Board in September 2024. However, many of the programs involved were not yet fully operational, so a follow-up report was required.

The Department's report indicates that it has expanded recruitment efforts to fill the treatment counselor positions at both the Oregon State Penitentiary (OSP) and the Snake River Correctional Institution (SRCI). Part of that effort includes working to create a paid internship program at SRCI for individuals working towards their Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor certification, which is required of all treatment counselors. In addition to having the program manager and support staff in place at both institutions, OSP has five treatment counselor positions filled and eight peer mentors trained, and at SRCI there is now one treatment counselor and six peer mentors. SRCI is also offering six internship opportunities through this program. Depending on the ability of the Department to fill the positions provided for the SUD program at OSP and SRCI, there may be a need for further analysis on how best to implement the program going forward.

The K-9 program now has two fully staffed drug detection teams regularly visiting OSP and the Oregon State Correctional Institute (OSCI). Searches take place four days a week, and these units are typically onsite for about 10 hours per day, working through all common areas, visiting areas, industrial work areas, dedicated work zones, and targeted cells. The K-9's are certified to detect various narcotics and alter search routes each day. Thus far there have been 133 targeted search operations or deterrent events and have 34 confirmed alerts to substances.

The wastewater testing program is collecting weekly samples from OSP, SRCI, and OSCI to test for "parent" substances, such as methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, or fentanyl, and the metabolized form of those substances. Samples are sent to an independent lab for testing with results sent back to DOC typically within 48 hours. DOC began "parent" substance testing in

August and metabolized testing panels in mid-November, has changed the lab methodology to detect substances at lower quantities, and will begin alternating sampling days, to determine if certain days of the week receive more positive results.

Recommendation: The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends that the Emergency Board acknowledge receipt of the report.

Request: Report on implementation progress of substance use disorder pilot program by Department of Corrections as follow up to a budget note related to Senate Bill 5504 (2023).

Recommendation: Acknowledge receipt of the report.

Discussion: The Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) operates 12 institutions across the state, which house over 12,000 adults in custody (AICs). Approximately 65 percent of AICs in DOC have a need for substance use disorder (SUD) treatment. During the 2023 Legislative Session, the Department received funding and staff to pilot two SUD treatment expansion programs and implement a K-9 program for drug detection. The Department was instructed via a budget note to return to the Public Safety Subcommittee of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means with an update on the implementation of these projects. DOC delivered updates at the September 2024 meeting of the Emergency Board and was asked to return to the December 2024 Emergency Board with further updates.

DOC's Behavioral Health Services (BHS) team has posted recruitments for the vacant SUD positions and is actively targeting universities and related symposiums and conferences for potential counselors and support staff. BHS has also developed a paid internship program for individuals who need to earn on-the-job hours towards their Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor certification. As of November 1, 2024, the Oregon State Penitentiary (OSP) has seven staff members dedicated to SUD treatment, with ongoing recruitment for further positions and one counselor in the hiring process. There are 60 AICs receiving services, and BHS staff are working with facility staff to develop a plan for remodeling multiple spaces. Snake River Correctional Institution (SRCI) has three dedicated staff members and six internship opportunities, and the staff have begun assessing clients for the program. Both facilities have also trained a number of AICs to become Certified Peer Recovery Mentors.

DOC has two fully staffed K-9 drug detection teams that regularly visit OSP and Oregon State Correction Institution (OSCI). As of November 2024, they have been a part of 133 targeted search operations or deterrent events and have 34 confirmed alerts to substances. DOC is also continuing to collect wastewater samples from OSP, OSCI, and SRCI. Testing methodologies are continuing to be refined to detect substances more accurately, and DOC plans to share a high-level view of these lab reports at the December meeting of the Emergency Board.



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Oregon Department of Corrections

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November 4, 2024

The Honorable Senator Rob Wagner, President of the Senate
The Honorable Representative Julie Fahey, Speaker of the House
Emergency Board
900 Court Street NE
H-178 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: DOC Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Budget Note

Dear Senator Wagner and Representative Fahey,

Per the Budget Note contained in Senate Bill 5504 (2023), please accept this letter as an update on our implementation progress.

By way of background, the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) operates 12 institutions across the state housing over 12,000 adults in custody (AICs). Approximately 65% of AICs in DOC have a need for substance use disorder (SUD) treatment and 52% of AICs are classified as having a “severe” need for treatment, which is between three to four times the average presence in the community on a nation-wide basis.

During the 2019 Oregon Legislative Session, SUD was recognized as a chronic illness (HB 2257). For the 2023 Legislative Session, DOC submitted an SUD policy option package (POP) requesting additional staff positions and resources to expand SUD treatment and move treatment to a chronic disease model of care. While the POP was not funded in its entirety, the department was given staff positions to pilot two SUD treatment expansion programs and to implement a K-9 program for drug detection.

The 2023-2025 legislatively approved budget included the following budget note:

“The Department’s budget includes funding for a substance use disorder pilot program to operate at Snake River Correctional Institution (SRCI) and the Oregon State Penitentiary (OSP), to provide treatment to adults in custody throughout their length of stay. Additionally, funding is included to operate K-9 units at OSP and Oregon State Corrections Institution (OSCI). The Department is directed to return to the Public Safety Subcommittee of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means during the 2024 session with an update on the implementation of the pilot program and the utilization of the K-9 units and baseline measures for the proliferation of drugs in institutions, including drug testing results and drug-related contraband misconducts.”

An expansion of SUD programming and peer support services are increasing the number of AICs who can access treatment. DOC anticipates that increased access to this chronic disease model of care, combined with stronger drug interdiction efforts, will lead to a reduction in institutional substance abuse. We have made progress implementing these programs despite numerous challenges and we’re excited to share the early results.

September Emergency Board

At the September 23, 2024 Emergency Board Public Safety Subcommittee hearing, DOC Director Mike Reese delivered updates on the status of our pilot drug interdiction and treatment efforts. As our wastewater testing, K-9 unit activities, and substance use disorder counseling were in their early stages of implementation, DOC was requested to provide additional updates at the December Emergency Board.

SUD Treatment Updates

DOC's Behavioral Health Services team has worked diligently to expand recruitment efforts to fill the vacant SUD treatment positions. They are now posting recruitments in a wide variety of colleges and universities in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. Recruitment tables were set up at the 2024 HB 4002 Symposium in Salem, the Region 10 Opioid Summit in Boise, and the Northwest Institute of Addictions Studies annual conference in Portland.

BHS worked with DOC and the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) recruitment partners to remove barriers for potential candidates and create a paid internship program for individuals who need to earn on-the-job hours towards their Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor certification. This certification is required for all SUD treatment counselors.

As of November 1, 2024:

- **OSP** has one Program Manager, five Treatment Counselors, and one support staff. There is one treatment counselor in the hiring process for OSP and recruitment is ongoing. To expand counseling capacity, OSP has trained eight AICs to become Certified Peer Recovery Mentors. There are 60 AICs who are receiving services such as assessments, group and one-on-one counseling, and peer support. BHS is continuing to work with facility staff to develop a plan for remodeling multiple spaces at OSP.
- **SRCI** has one program manager, one treatment counselor, and one support staff. There are six internship opportunities at SRCI. To expand counseling capacity, SRCI has trained six AICs to become Certified Peer Recovery Mentors. SRCI has begun assessing clients for the program. Staff is working within the existing space to find locations for all the treatment staff and the group rooms that will be needed.

K-9 Utilization Update

DOC currently has two fully staffed K-9 drug detection teams, composed of both dogs and handlers. Both teams regularly visit OSP and OSCI as they coordinate with the DOC Inspector General Drug Interdiction Unit and Security Threat Management Teams to identify the movement of drugs within our facilities and identify search locations.

These K-9 teams are unique, in that they are paired 24/7. The dogs have friendly demeanors, making them easy to take around people as they go to search specific locations for contraband. To date, they have been a part of 133 targeted search operations or deterrent events and have 34 confirmed alerts to substances.

We are requesting time on the committee agenda to demonstrate the capabilities of one of the K-9 teams.

Baseline Drug Proliferation Measure: Wastewater Testing

We are continuing to collect wastewater samples for analysis from OSP, OSCI, and SRCI. As we review the findings, we are working with our contracted laboratory to refine our testing methodologies in the following ways:

- Currently, we test for “parent” substances – meaning the actual drug itself. This is useful in the scenario where someone may be flushing substances to avoid detection. While maintaining this regimen, we will be expanding our lab work to include “metabolites” in our panel. These metabolites are the chemical signatures that remain after the body processes certain drugs. The new panel will be a part of our reporting starting November 15, so we will have about three weeks of data. This is an existing panel used regularly by the laboratory, so we have a high degree of confidence that results will be available for the hearing.
- Changing laboratory methodology to allow for better detection of substances at lower quantities.
- Optimizing our testing schedule to align with drug use patterns. Currently, a sample is pulled once a week, with that sample containing extractions covering a 24-hour period. We will be running a series of samples to determine if certain days of the week are receiving more positive results.

We would like to share a high-level view of these lab reports at the December Emergency board to give the committee a better understanding of how we are interpreting this data to impact our SUD counseling and interdiction efforts.

Conclusion

DOC has made significant progress implementing and refining our SUD counseling and drug interdiction pilot programs. The early results of these efforts are exciting to share as we start to see a more robust view of drug use and the impacts of our intervention strategies. Based on this success, we are hopeful that we will be able to expand these efforts to other facilities in the near future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Reese". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" and last name "Reese" clearly legible.

Michael Reese
Director