

Submitter: Hannah Woods

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1573

Chair and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

I am writing in opposition to SB 1573. This bill would leave rural Oregon (most of Oregon) without the systems of care that provide lifesaving services to people who use substances.

Providers and communities have spent years building capacity and trust. Abrupt structural changes make it harder to deliver consistent care and risk leaving people without the services they need. As someone who has ran a harm reduction program in a rural/frontier county, I know firsthand that the ONLY way folks are receiving lifesaving care such as naloxone, connection to treatment, peer support, etc., is through mobile SSP programs. This bill WILL leave rural areas without the only services that are providing care to people who use drugs. These syringe service programs are also the only systems set up in most areas to collect syringe litter. When I ran a syringe exchange program, we collected over 10,000 syringes each year despite handing out only hundreds of syringes for safe use purposes. This bill will NOT help with sharps litter. It will make it worse. I am begging you to do research into how ineffective this bill would be and how much harm it will cause.

Oregon should focus on strengthening existing programs, especially those in rural areas that provide needed services to end the drug epidemics — not creating instability through major governance shifts. I urge you to oppose SB 1573.

Thank you for considering my testimony.