

Submitter: Sabrina Garcia
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health
Measure, Appointment or SB1573
Topic:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to respectfully oppose this bill, which would significantly restrict syringe service programs in Oregon.

Syringe exchange programs are evidence-based public health interventions with decades of research demonstrating their effectiveness. These programs reduce the transmission of HIV, hepatitis C, and other blood-borne infections, increase safe syringe disposal, and serve as a critical point of connection to substance use treatment, behavioral health care, and other supportive services.

In rural areas of Oregon, mobile and temporary syringe service programs are essential. Many counties do not have the population density or infrastructure to support fixed-site services. Mobile and pop-up models are often the only practical and effective way to reach people who use drugs and connect them to care. By restricting or eliminating these service models, this bill would effectively remove access to syringe exchange services in many parts of the state.

The consequences of eliminating these programs are well documented. Reduced access to syringe services leads to increased syringe litter, higher rates of infectious disease transmission, and fewer opportunities to engage individuals in treatment and recovery services. Syringe service programs are not only a public health tool, but also a proven strategy for building trust and opening the door to care for people who are otherwise disconnected from health systems.

Rather than improving public safety or community health, this bill would undermine both public health and behavioral health outcomes across Oregon, particularly in rural and underserved communities.

For these reasons, I urge you to oppose this bill and to support evidence-based approaches that protect public health, reduce harm, and increase pathways to treatment and recovery.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Sabrina Garcia

Klamath Falls Oregon