



February 4, 2026

**Clackamas County Board of Commissioners  
Policy Position  
SB 1573: Relating to Syringe Service Programs**

**Clackamas County opposes SB 1573 and recommends amendments to reach common ground on shared goals.** We are committed to the dual priorities of safe communities and the prevention of infectious disease transmission. We support the underlying intent of SB 1573 to ensure that syringes are properly disposed of and that programs are appropriately situated within our communities. However, to ensure this bill can be effective without unintentionally limiting access to vital community health services, we request the following amendments.

**Omit Liability Language**

The current language introduces significant legal exposure for county governments (serving as local public health authorities) and third-party health providers. Attaching broad civil liability to the proximity of these services could lead to the exhaustion of limited public budgets on legal defense rather than community care. This must change to find support.

**Reduce Distance to 1,000-foot Buffer**

While we support a standardized buffer, a 2,000-foot radius is functionally prohibitive in densely populated or urbanized county sectors, effectively banning safe syringe services entirely, limiting access to services that are proven to reduce HIV and hepatitis C transmissions.

**Scope of Protected Facilities to only K-12**

SB 1573 currently includes "childcare facilities" alongside K-12 schools. Unlike K-12 schools, childcare facilities (including small home-based providers) are ubiquitous and can open or close with high frequency. This creates a "moving target" for compliance.

**Clarify the Definition of Syringes**

The definition of "safe syringe program" does not distinguish between syringes used for safer injection drug use and those used for medical purposes, such as insulin administration for individuals with diabetes. As written, this definition could inadvertently prohibit mobile service providers from delivering essential care, even when services are unrelated to substance use.

Clackamas County believes that public health and public safety are not mutually exclusive. By adopting a 1,000-foot K-12 buffer and limiting liability, the legislature can protect children without adversely affecting programs that prevent the spread of infectious diseases and connect at-risk individuals to recovery services.

Please contact Trent Wilson ([twilson2@clackamas.us](mailto:twilson2@clackamas.us)) for more information.