

Max's Mission

Saving Lives in Southern Oregon through Opioid Outreach and Naloxone Education and Distribution

Chair and Members of the Senate Committee,

My name is Seraphina Pinsky. I am writing in opposition to Senate Bill 1573.

I serve as the Tri-County Coordinator for Max's Mission and work directly within Oregon's Behavioral Health Resource Network system. In several of the rural counties we serve, we are one of the only and in some areas the only safe syringe disposal option available. SB 1573 would significantly undermine this essential public health function.

From a healthcare perspective, syringe service programs are a proven tool to prevent the spread of communicable diseases, including hepatitis C and HIV, both of which remain persistent and costly public health challenges in Oregon. Eliminating or severely restricting SSP access does not stop substance use, it increases unsafe syringe reuse and improper disposal, leading to higher disease transmission and greater strain on emergency rooms, public health departments, and long-term healthcare systems.

From a fiscal standpoint, SB 1573 is counterproductive. Treating hepatitis C, HIV, and injection-related infections costs the state far more than preventing them. SSPs reduce these downstream medical costs while also decreasing the need for emergency response, hospitalizations, and environmental cleanup. Policies that restrict prevention services ultimately increase taxpayer burden.

The proposed 2,000-foot school and childcare zoning restriction may appear reasonable on paper, but in practice it would eliminate SSP access across large portions of rural Oregon. In many small towns, schools and childcare facilities are centrally located, meaning this bill would effectively ban mobile and temporary SSP services entirely in those communities. This creates a disproportionate impact across Oregon's 36 counties, with rural areas bearing the greatest harm and the fewest alternatives.

SB 1573 would also discourage syringe disposal services, the very mechanism that keeps communities, children, and public spaces safer. Restricting or penalizing SSPs increases the likelihood of improper disposal, directly contradicting the stated goal of protecting public health and safety.

I respectfully urge you to oppose SB 1573 and instead support evidence-based, fiscally responsible public health strategies that work across all counties, especially rural ones where access is already limited and prevention services are critical.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Seraphina
Tri-County Coordinator, Max's Mission
Behavioral Health Resource Network Partner
Oregon