

Dear Chair Prozanski and members of the Senate Committee On Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation,

My name is Matthew Peterson, I am here to speak on behalf of myself, my family, friends and neighbors that have struggled with substance use disorder. I have spent time navigating and trying to assist people in navigating their recovery with what resources were available

It is imperative and urgent to fully implement and fully fund measure 110.

Covid-19 has deepened socioeconomic problems and forced people to isolate. These are all known drivers of stress, anxiety, depression and negatively impact overall mental health in ways that we know lead to problematic substance use.

This is happening while fentanyl and more potent analogues are being mixed in the illicit supply more frequently and with a larger variety of other substances. Oregon and the west coast had not seen as much of that in the past but it continues to increase here.

This has led to a huge spike in overdose deaths across the US including a 40% increase in Oregon. 12 years and 750,000 Americans have died from accidental overdose, not to say for the countless lives that have been cut short from the other health risks that come with addiction.

Meanwhile, Oregon ranks near dead last in access to treatment. It is a system that pre-covid had struggled for a variety of reasons to meet the needs of Oregonians. With the universally agreed number 1 issue being the need of more funding to build capacity.

The economic hardships caused by Covid-19 have also had an impact on an addiction treatment system that was barely getting by financially and was struggling to meet the capacity needs.

Oregonians boldly voted to take addiction out of the criminal justice system and correctly, to be now solely within the public health system. But that comes with an increased need to build capacity within the public health system to meet people struggling with addiction, one of the most complex mental health disorders, with the needed access to a better variety of effective treatments and tools to address the issues that drive problematic substance use.

It is paramount that m110 is fully implemented and funded not just because of the magnitude of the moment in terms of the public health emergency that is the overdose epidemic but also because it is vital that the group of community stakeholders put together to bolster and rebuild the treatment system in a way that is low-barrier, culturally-responsive and can address the complex needs of Oregonians struggling with addiction, that they be given the funding to meet what's needed and meet the expectations of voters that passed measure 110.

With the American Rescue Act being signed into law, Oregon should be receiving at least 4.26 Billion in Federal Aid. Funding measure 110 is a direct way you can help combat the deeper disparities and lasting effects that Covid will have on our state. It is a way to directly help save lives and ease the suffering our neighbors are experiencing. Having sufficient access to low-barrier treatment options will prepare a system to deal with the challenges we are facing now and the challenge of another wave of addiction caused by Covid.

Any investment made into the treatment system will save significant money downstream by helping people overcome the health and socioeconomic issues that come with problematic substance use.

Oregon voters met the magnitude of this moment in the public health emergency by leading the country by passing measure 110. It is now your turn to meet the moment and lead by supporting SB 755. Oregon voters gave us an opportunity, it would be tragic if we missed. Our loved ones and neighbors struggling to find treatment that works for them, lives depend on it.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Matthew Peterson