

Dear Chair Prozanski and other members- Thank you for taking the time to read this and for letting me speak earlier today.

My name is Katrina Dimick and I'm a sixth generation Oregonian a small business owner and a constituent of Senator Dembrow.

I'm also the sister of an addict. And I want to speak today about the importance of implementing the full range of services passed with Measure 110

My brother Brian died just over three years ago of a heroin overdose after years of struggling with various substances.

Years earlier near the beginning of his spiral with addiction my brother felt himself loosing control and asked for help. He wanted to seek professional treatment, but didn't know where to start so took things into his own hands and he stopped cold turkey, which caused scary medical problems as his body went into withdrawals.

Our mother was lost in a world she didn't know much about and took him to urgent care where he was told he needed to be medically supervised through his detox to avoid further medical complications. Only problem was there were no available beds in any treatment centers in the entire state. He was told he'd be put on a waiting list that could be a week or two long. This more or less defeated the purpose of going at all and was incredibly scary during a vulnerable time.

Our mother decided to take things into her own hands and called every facility she could and eventually found him a spot opening up the following day at a private facility in Portland.

Brian attended a detox program and overall had a very positive experience. Once his detox was complete though he was discharged with a few pages of notes and an appointment with a therapist who was not even an addiction counselor. Brian did not click with the therapist and was not given any other resources to try alternatively. He had particularly clicked with the peer support/group therapy aspect of the treatment center so as a family we looked into trying to find something similar but were only able to find religiously affiliated options. Participating in a session where faith is a cornerstone of the group felt disingenuous to Brian and was unhelpful in his own road to recovery.

And on top of all that Even though my brother had a job with great insurance at the time, his stay came with a bill for two grand out of pocket. That was not the kind of money that anyone in my family had lying around at the time but our mother managed to figure it out. For the rest of his life that feeling of debt to our mother and fear of the cost of treatment caused my brother to avoid treatment in the future even when he expressed interest in trying again.

After his experience in Detox- Brian remained sober for over a year but slowly without professional assistance or easy access to group therapy options that didn't involve a religious aspect he began to struggle again. My brother was a kind, bright, thoughtful person whose struggles were hard and deeply embarrassing to him. We as a family were underprepared to help him navigate the system and the system was underprepared to help him navigate and succeed at long term recovery.

As hard as this was for my brother and as tragically as his life ended, I can only imagine how much harder this entire experience would be for more marginalized people in Oregon with our serious lack of accessible treatment resources. We need to offer addicts long term care and assistance, we have to build a system that cares about long term success and provides equitable access to better futures.

Passing Measure 110 was a huge success for the future of addiction services in Oregon but we can't dawdle, we have to keep the ball rolling and actually invest in what voters voted for. We need effective, accessible and compassionate care available to ALL OREGONIANS as soon as possible especially during these times when we are all arguably struggling more than usual.

Thank you,  
-Katrina Dimick