



02/23/2021

From:
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Introduction:

Representative Sanchez, Vice-Chair Moore-Green and fellow committee members thank you for this opportunity. My name is Fernando Pena. I am the Operation Director of the NW Instituto Latino. I am a person in long-term recovery from substance use disorder and other mental health concerns and I am here to lend my support to House Bill 3111.

Points:

According to The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in 2019 Oregon has a 9.22% untreated addiction rate. Over the course of the past 12 months due to the pandemic this already horrific tragedy has only gotten worse, with the Oregon Health Authority reporting that "between April and May 2020 there was a 28% increase in overdose deaths, and a more than 15% increase in overdose deaths between March and April.

All this tragedy is only compounded by the fact that Illicit drug use in Oregon already **exceeds** the national average, per capita while at the same time ranking 50th in the nation in access to treat and recovery services. If you are a member of a BIPOC community this lack of culturally specific recovery resources is even pronounced.

However, in all this loss of life, productivity, health and family there is hope. Recovery from the disease of addiction is possible. And properly funded Peer Run Recovery Centers are one of the most promising, cost effective, culturally responsive ways to help sick Oregonians find healing.

Well funded and properly staffed Peer Recovery Centers are proven to help reduce recidivism, criminality, overdoses and emergency room admissions.

Many of you may be wondering why you have never heard of such an amazing service. The answer for that is simple. Peer Recovery Services exist outside of the fee for service treatment model. Let me be clear, I am not here to disparage SUD treatment. It is an absolutely effective way to help someone struggling with addiction to set the stage for their recovery by finding sobriety.

However, recovery is more than just sobriety. Recovery is a long slow process, a journey and having a well funded and staffed recovery center where you can just show up any time without



an appointment and be greeted by a culturally appropriate smiling face that understands the struggles you are going through is absolutely life-changing.

It is for this reason that I support HB3111 and know that developing a position in the Oregon Health Authority responsible for overseeing recovery services will ensure that recovery support is a priority in Oregon. Currently the state funds a huge system to support treatment and we are simply asking for a single position to be added to that system that understands and advocates for long term recovery supports outside of the treatment setting.

Thank you Rep Sanchez for being the Chief Sponsor of the Bill and I humbly ask the Ways and Means to fund this desperately needed resource.

Please contact me with any questions and let me know if you will be there.