

Written Testimony - Oregon Budget 2025
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As an Oregonian and Licensed Clinical Social Worker closely following the launch of the state's regulated psilocybin therapy program, I have seen firsthand the transformative impact of psilocybin services on individuals struggling with mental health challenges.

With my background in mental health services and a strong desire to help people, I became trained in psychedelic assisted therapy, and was able to obtain the first license to open a Service Center in the state of Oregon and the Nation. Opening up and operating EPIC Healing Eugene (in Eugene) and developing it into a long-term comprehensive and supportive program to those who come, has been some of the most rewarding work of my life. Being on the front lines as a licensed psilocybin facilitator, I am fortunate to receive on-going reports of how much this service has helped people heal and improve their lives. This type of regulated (above-ground) service is irreplaceable for so many that come, where they can be assured that they will be treated well and staff are trained and adhere to the highest safety and ethical standards. For those who come to us they often report how this was absolutely a life-changing experience for them, compared to the years of suffering related to their mental health struggles, often stemming from childhood abuse and life trauma. Most have spent years seeking help through an often limited mental health system, to succumb to years of taking a growing list of antidepressant, anti-anxiety, and antipsychotic medications so they can be more numb to the pain they feel. Unfortunately, this treatment strategy doesn't really touch the part of them that is in need of deep healing.

Psilocybin therapy offers something that other modalities aren't able to, While traditional counseling is helpful in preparing a client for this inner work, Psilocybin helps a person get in touch with the core of who they, to remember their inner spark, and gain insights on taking the next steps towards wellness. Part of this mechanism is physiologically, in that there is a calming of the default mode network (the conditioned, fearful, or guarded part of self), so a person can think outside the box and gain insight into their lives, without getting overwhelmed in the process. Pharmaceutical medications to "treat" depression and anxiety don't do this. Our mental health crisis in Oregon and across the nation is a real thing, with all of us being able to think of someone we know who is or has struggled with depression, anxiety, addictions, and loss of hope.

Here's a few quotes from our clients:

"Life changing! It has removed my tendency to panic and has given me tools to help soothe myself when panic creeps in."

"I truly believe psilocybin is the future of mental health after my experience. I HIGHLY recommend the therapy." - Anonymous EPIC Client Review

"It clearly changed the way I was seeing things in my life. It also changed my relations with other people. Definitely less tension and anxiety." - Anonymous EPIC Client Review

"I am a new person now. I rarely panic and when I do I have tools that can help me self-soothe. I haven't had a full blown panic attack since then. I'm also more open to joy and love and the greater spirit. It's miraculous!" - Anonymous EPIC Client Review

"The biggest change has been a decrease in the amount of generalized anger I feel." - Anonymous EPIC Client Review

"Michael Pollan said it best, one psilocybin therapy experience is worth hundreds of hours of one on one psychotherapy sessions." - Anonymous EPIC Client Review

"Epic Healing provided me with the legal means to experience psilocybin therapy. They did it with a thoroughness that allowed me to feel safe and supported. I will live a fuller life as a result." - Anonymous EPIC Client Review

Some background on the program and why we need your help:

The program, established under Measure 109 in 2020, has provided life-changing hope and healing to over 8,500 clients facing treatment resistant depression, anxiety, PTSD, and addiction—conditions that traditional treatments have often failed to address.

The Oregon Psilocybin Services program is a state-regulated psilocybin therapy program, meaning that clients over the age of 21 are only allowed access to consume psilocybin in a state licensed service center, under the supervision of a trained and licensed facilitator. Overseen by the OHA, there are strict guidelines around keeping clients and the community safe. In just over a year and half, the program has seen remarkable results of healing, and of the over 8,500 clients served, less than .12% have required emergency services.

However, less than two years in, the Oregon Psilocybin Services program is still in its infancy. As the first-of-its-kind, programs like this need time and support to

reach their full potential. Importantly, 2025 will be the first year there will be access to comprehensive data on the program thanks to Senate Bill 303, passed in 2023. Major research initiatives studying the impacts and outcomes of psilocybin services are also underway; this information will provide invaluable insights into how psilocybin services can be optimized to address Oregon's mental health crisis.

This year, the Oregon Psilocybin Services (OPS) program is at a pivotal moment. A \$3.5 million budget shortfall threatens to undermine its ability to provide equitable access to care, which would double licensing fees. For service centers with \$10,000 licensing fees, this is not a change that could be easily absorbed. This shortfall threatens to undermine Measure 109's core promise to deliver state-regulated psilocybin therapy, and the state's leadership in mental health innovation. At the same time, House Bill 2387, the Psilocybin Services Program Improvement Bill, offers a path forward to strengthen the program's foundation, improve client safety, and better integrate psilocybin services into Oregon's healthcare and behavioral health systems.

In the coming year, psilocybin therapy is likely to play a stronger role in supporting Oregon's goal to decrease mental health and substance use disorders, but without your support, this innovative mental health initiative could falter before it has the chance to fully demonstrate its impact. I urge you to champion funding for Oregon Psilocybin Services for the program and support the passage of HB 2387.

Oregon has the opportunity to lead the nation in addressing mental health challenges with compassion and innovation. Let's give this program the time and resources it needs to establish itself as a model for others to follow, and honor the will of the voters to make this program a success.

Thank you for your leadership and attention to this urgent matter.

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