



Oregon Juvenile Department Directors' Association

Representing Oregon's County Juvenile Departments

www.ojdda.org

OJDDA Statement Regarding Oregon's Approach for Youth SUD Services Continuum

The Oregon Juvenile Department Director's Association (OJDDA) understands the value and importance of a robust continuum of services from primary prevention through recovery services for Oregon's youth. National research is clear that adults experiencing addiction begin using alcohol, marijuana and other drugs before they are 18 years of age. Local communities and counties are uniquely situated as key partners across the range of services - and local juvenile departments are directly impacted by the use of controlled substances of youth in their work.

There are many reasons that young people begin to experiment and use controlled substances due to many unforeseen circumstances including: familial acceptance, peer normative behaviors, and self-medicating for underlying mental health issues including, depression and anxiety. OJDDA recommends a systemic approach to preventing and intervening with youth across the substance use spectrum. The recommendation includes using best practices by investing in Certified Prevention Specialists grounded in the science of addiction prevention, implementing evidence-based practices for youth intervention and treatment.

Counties are uniquely positioned to work locally within the county structure and community-based organizations to receive funding and implement best practices for youth interventions. Examples of programming that have strong outcomes are the Juvenile Crime Prevention funds managed through Youth Development Oregon and Oregon Youth Authority. Both of these funding streams require robust community partnerships.

OJDDA supports the Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission and the State System of Care Advisory Council in developing a comprehensive prevention strategy to stop substance use before it starts, and create pathways for treatment and recovery services for youth across the behavioral health systems. The studies should focus on services across the State and consider the unique differences between rural, suburban and urban areas for youth services.

OJDDA knows that unmet substance use disorders impact youths' abilities to engage in pro-social activities and often lead to more costly and more restrictive settings, including juvenile detention. Ensuring that youth and families have access to accurate information and education about the effects of cannabis and opioids is crucial for informed decision-making and health. Misinformation can lead to misconceptions about the safety and impact of these substances on developing brains and contribute to the cannabis and opioid crisis.

OJDDA encourages including local juvenile justice perspective whenever the State creates a public safety, behavioral health or substance use disorder treatment task force. Engaging justice-involved youth services perspective in legislative, policy and treatment studies provides a critical understanding of adolescent development that is often forgotten in the urgency task team creation.