

My Voice

Eastern Oregon residents need Measure 110

As a lifelong resident of rural Oregon, I know all too well how many people in our region are affected by drug addiction. Addiction knows no bounds and strikes people regardless of where they live, their age, background or community status.

It's not just our community. In fact, one in 10 Oregonians is addicted to drugs and one to two people die daily in our state due to an overdose.

This is why I am a strong supporter of Measure 110. We in Eastern Oregon particularly are in dire need of expanded services for addiction recovery. This measure would provide that. It will greatly expand access to drug treatment and recovery services throughout the state. Anyone who



CAMI BEAN
FAMILY NURSE
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wants services will be able to get them, not just those who have the funds or the "right" insurance.

Throughout my life, I've known many people struggling with substance use disorders — adolescents, family, friends and neighbors. Resources for recovery for far too many people didn't exist or were inaccessible. I've attended more than my share of funerals due to drug overdoses that could, and should, have been prevented.

Now that I am a family nurse practitioner, I've seen patients held in the same grip of drugs.

One of the things many people struggling with addiction have in common is a desire to break the cycle, yet they don't know where to turn, and neither do many of those to whom they turn for help.

I've dealt with this firsthand as a health care provider, seeking access to recovery for patients ready to beat their addiction. Finding a spot in a drug treatment program immediately is next to impossible. It doesn't help that Oregon ranks nearly last of all states in the availability of drug treatment. Wait lists often are weeks — and sometimes months — long.

When people with addiction must wait, many revert to problematic drug use. The longer the wait, the more at-risk they are of overdosing. When people know how scarce resources are, many choose to not seek help at all. Others can't bear the shame the senseless stigma of addiction carries.

However, by voting "YES" on Measure 110 on Nov. 3 we finally can change this for the better. This proposal will not legalize any drugs. Rather, it greatly expands access to drug treatment and recovery services for those who want and need them—without creating any new taxes. It'll be paid for with existing marijuana tax money.

Changing our approach to addiction and treating it as a health issue is long overdue. We need Measure 110 now. The way we treat addiction has put people in a position of worrying about being arrested when coming forward for help. Even a misdemeanor charge for low-level possession of drugs can result in a criminal record that ruins lives.

The criminal records people with addictions are saddled with create new barriers to housing, jobs, student loans, professional licenses and more. Jailing people for an addiction derails access to recovery and other health care services, rips families apart, and makes it harder for them to get their lives on track. Evidence shows that criminal charges for addiction related crimes have done nothing to solve the addiction crisis we are facing.

This practice is cruel and ineffective. Measure 110 provides an effective, humane approach to addiction by providing access to treatment and recovery services, housing and other supportive services.

Without Measure 110, it's a truly heart-breaking situation for me as a provider, my patients and their loved ones. The last thing I want as a care provider is to not be able to connect patients with the resources they need when they are ready.

Nov. 3 is our opportunity to say "enough is enough" and take a stand to decriminalize addiction and treat it as a health issue, best managed by health care professionals.

About the Author

Cami Bean of La Grande is a registered nurse in Oregon and a family nurse practitioner.



Other Views

A fall update from Eastern Oregon University

Eastern Oregon University is excited to welcome students back to our campus and community for fall term. With gratitude for the incredible work of so many colleagues and partners, we share an update on EOU's La Grande campus resumption activities for the new academic year.

Six months ago, the global COVID-19 pandemic dispersed our main campus community as we moved to remote learning to decrease exposure. Faculty, students, staff and partners of EOU responded to this new reality by innovating and improvising to ensure students were able to continue their educational journeys from a distance. With grit and determination our students, faculty and staff made the best of a challenging situation.

Well before the conclusion of the spring term, EOU embarked on its resumption plan for the 2020 academic year. A pioneer in distance and online education, EOU has a great deal of expertise in providing a quality education leveraging state-of-the-art delivery technology. However, students who choose to attend EOU at our campus in La Grande do so for the experiences, relationships and co-curricular activities that are offered through in-person instruction and interaction.

Ultimately, our mission calls us back to provide campus-based education and programs that students need and desire. At EOU, we confronted the Great Depression soon after our founding, and during World War II we modified operations to educate soldiers. Today we face a global pandemic, and as in the past we are well-equipped to adapt, innovate and respond creatively to continue serving our students and this region. Our on-campus resumption is not the easy



TOM INSKO
EOU PRESIDENT



RICHARD CHAVES
EOU BOARD CHAIRMAN

path. It is the necessary one. After months of thoughtful planning and expansive consideration, we are resuming on-campus instruction. No single path or solution will meet the needs of all, so the guiding themes of safety, wellness, equity, collaboration, flexibility and innovation provide the necessary balance for effective resumption.

For fall term, approximately half of EOU's on-campus courses are in-person, and the rest in hybrid or remote modalities. When determining instruction modality, college deans and faculty worked to ensure educational quality while mitigating virus exposure risk.

Support services like tutoring, career and internship assistance, advising, financial aid, student health and the library are providing resources remotely and in-person with safety measures. Student clubs, cultural events and campus life look different this fall, but they will remain a vital part of the EOU experience. Athletic schedules and events have been modified to reduce risk while preserving the student-athlete experience. One example of this is the postponement of fall sports competitions to early next year to reduce potential disruption to campus instruction due to a COVID-19 outbreak.

Instructors and mentors respond and inspire through a face covering or across a video screen. Reference texts and computer labs, regularly sterilized, help refine understanding. Friends in clubs, classes and residence halls, smiling behind a face covering,

remind each student that they belong in our community.

Society teaches us to individually control our world and our destinies. But this pandemic reminds us how interdependent we really are — our wellness and progress are inextricably linked to our shared behaviors and collective ability to mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19.

Consequently, every student engaging in a class or activity on EOU's campus was tested upon their arrival to our community. This step was taken to reduce the chances of students unknowingly transferring the virus from their home community to La Grande.

EOU's La Grande campus resumption will not be without challenges and we fully expect to experience COVID-19 cases. But we are well-equipped to respond appropriately as circumstances arise. EOU has endeavored to add resources, implement safety protocols and develop incident response procedures to provide for the safety of all.

Alongside our region, we are testing our strength to reorganize, reimagine and rebound. This year will be like no other as we work to adapt and respond to the dynamic environment created by COVID-19. We welcome our returning and new Mountaineers, and together we will overcome the challenges we face.

About the Authors

Tom Insko is president of Eastern Oregon University, and Richard Chaves is chairman of the EOU Board of Directors.

Letters

Diversity of views strengthens our democracy

I was appalled and saddened by the theft and vandalism of Mr. Gary Graham's political sign in Union. The eighth commandment in the Bible states "thou shalt not steal." The Constitution of our United States gives us the right to free speech. We as a community need to condemn any acts

intended to repress our neighbors' expression of their views, whether or not we agree with them.

The beauty and strength of our democracy comes with embracing a diversity of views. This is what gives us varied ideas on how to solve our community's, our nation's and our world's problems. I shudder to think that some people want to suppress, steal or burn my or my neighbor's opinions.

Before you try to shut down someone's speech, think about if you want our country to become like North Korea, Russia or China, where citizens are jailed or killed for expressing opposing views. A better option for all of us is to actually talk to our neighbors, have a respectful debate and be sure that we vote.

Corrine Dutto
La Grande

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THE OBSERVER

An independent newspaper founded in 1896

www.lagrandeobserver.com

Periodicals postage paid at Pendleton, Oregon 97801
Published Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays
(except postal holidays) by EO Media Group,
911 Jefferson Ave., La Grande, OR 97850
(USPS 299-260)

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The Observer, 911 Jefferson Ave., La Grande, OR 97850

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