

# Combating addiction takes science, awareness

According to Dwight Holton, many modern tragedies begin with an addiction.

Crime, mental health breakdowns, even suicide and homicide can often be traced back to a pill or a poison — some brains are just wired to be susceptible to outside influence. And many of the systems of care and punishment our society has in place don't do much to get to the root of the problem, or save people who are in danger of hurting themselves or others.

Holton is a former federal prosecutor and Oregon's U.S. attorney. In that line of work, by the time he got involved it was too late. Someone had already been hurt, bad decisions had been made, lives had been impacted for the worse.

In 2014 he took over as director of Lines for Life, a Portland-based nonprofit that has twin goals of preventing substance abuse and suicide. He wanted to get involved early, to prevent the bad decisions in the first place. And while it might seem at first glance that substance abuse and suicide are different threats, Holton said they are nearly always intertwined.

In the course of his new work, he quickly realized that the major source of substance abuse problems in Oregon come from prescription pills. They kill more Oregonians — hundreds a year — than all illegal drugs. Holton said a major factor may be that Oregonians think prescription pills are safer than they actually are. We think heck: these things are legal, they

are given to me by my doctor and they make me feel better. What's the downside?

Addiction can cause people to do terrible things outside their own nature — to lie and cheat and embezzle and burgle and assault and even kill. They may get stuck in a cycle of depression and broken relationships.

So how can the state reduce the number of people laid low by prescription pills? Holton's plan is to reduce the number of prescribed but unnecessary opioids. Currently, 100 million such pills are prescribed in Oregon each year. He also wants more places where patients can dispose of unused medicines. In addition, Holton sees the benefit of better treatment and less-addictive versions of the medication.

There is a lot to talk through and plenty to think about, which is why Holton has taken his crew on the road. They met recently in La Grande to start a discussion about identifying best practices across the state.

There is no easy answer to the problem of prescription drugs. Science continues to learn more about addiction, and continues to fine tune medicines to reduce the likelihood they will be misused.

One first step must be to boost awareness of how dangerous prescription opioids can be. Use them only when necessary, discard them when you're through, and if you think you have a problem get help immediately. Lines for Life (call the helpline at 1-800-923-4357) is a great place to start.



## Grant County should take lead ... and talk about it

By Matt Ipson  
To the Blue Mountain Eagle



Matt Ipson

The children and teens of today are our hope for tomorrow. It's important for us as caring adults, parents and communities to help set young people on the path for a healthy future and support them as they work to create positive change.

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and this year it is important that we take this time to remember that sexual abuse is not just a problem for adults. Throughout this month, *It's time ... to talk about it!* This campaign encourages individuals and communities to support healthy sexual development.

Young people face many challenges during adolescence. Stereotypes and negative messages in the media don't make this process easy.

Girls and young women between the ages of 16 and 24 ex-

perience the highest rate of intimate partner violence, almost triple the national average. Victims of sexual assault — including teenagers and young adults — may face long-lasting effects. Sexual violence also has a profound impact on a victim's family, friends, neighbors, and the community at large.

By learning and talking about healthy adolescent sexuality, adults are able to support the teens in their lives. It's time for adults and communities to be a resource to teens so they learn and grow.

Grant County should take the lead in raising awareness and preventing sexual violence.

How can we support teens during this time of change and discovery? Young people need age-appropriate

information about healthy sexuality and relationships from trusted adults. The first step is to start an open and honest dialogue. Ask questions and, most importantly, listen. We can all play a role in modeling healthy behaviors, promoting positive skills, and creating safe environments. It's important to empower the voices of youth and challenge negative, unhealthy messages.

It's OK if you don't have all the answers. It's more important to welcome questions and learn together. To create a vision for a future without sexual violence, every voice can play a role in a healthier, safer tomorrow for all.

You can use your voice to start the conversation. You can support the voices of young people, and together we can amplify our voices for a healthy future.

*It's time ... to talk about it!*  
— Matt Ipson is the deputy district attorney for Grant County.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Access at risk

To the Editor:

What the government giveth, the government taketh away. Keep that in mind after you have read the April 22 issue of the Blue Mountain Eagle.

What gave me a chuckle is the statement by one letter writer that the Grant County Ordinance 2013-01, designed to protect our forest access, was only signed by the three on the County Court and sheriff. Are you aware that our entire forest access can be wiped out with the signature of one man?

That signature is attached to 300-plus pages of indecipherable documents compiled by a staff of which 90 percent are not from this area and are lacking knowledge and understanding of our unique forest, history, and citizens.

The "kiss and make up" approach to a solution comes much too late, with too little. The "parties outside of Grant County" that the writer fears may make decisions affecting our county are already here. They are called the Blue Mountains Forest Partners whose leadership originated out of state and from Oregon's metropolitan areas, following the dollar in our local economy.

Congress has messed with our Constitution so much that nothing is clear anymore, except for the fact that we, the people, are not part of their agenda that continues to smell like Agenda 21.

Bob Kerr  
Canyon City

Well, folks, it wasn't our druthers to close the theaters — walk-in and drive-in — but it got to the point where we just couldn't keep the lights on any longer. Yes, it's been some time since we were in operation, and people are still telling us how they miss the theaters.

But what it came down to is, that there was not enough business to support the operation. If we would have had 15,000 people to draw from, we might have made it work. A handful of patrons coming to the theater a couple times a year just wasn't enough.

We survived television, home movies, DVDs and all that, but we couldn't overcome Dish and Direct and any other satellite company that might be out there. People could put up a dish anywhere in the county and stay home with a bunch of friends and watch whatever they wanted to. So when you are taking in \$20 dollars and spending \$50 to stay open, well ask any mathematician, it can't be done. We were forced to close.

We could not have stayed in business anyway when the movie industry forced every theater to change to digital projectors to the tune of \$75,000 each. It forced the closure of a lot of small theaters, and those that were able to survive did so with the financial help of their local communities.

We are truly sorry. And as we said, it wasn't our druthers. We hope this explanation helps.

Dean and Betty Elliott  
Canyon City

The term "medical marijuana" is a scam and subterfuge. As a 23-year former resident of Burns I considered Sen. Ferrioli as our friend, so why has he seemed not only to support the influx of dope into the communities but has introduced legislation to speed it up? To the senator's credit he did attempt to introduce legislation prohibiting packaging of so-called medical marijuana products directed towards children, which was strongly and unbelievably rejected by the Democrats, led by Sen. Floyd Prozanski. That tells us the mindset of the Democrats.

Why does Sen. Ferrioli think so many people are on welfare even when jobs become available? Because many are addicted to marijuana which is more important to them than their spouses, their children or getting clean so they can pass a drug test and get a good job. Is any responsible employer is going to risk the liability and hire marijuana-laced employees to operate equipment or interact with customers? Of course not.

The politicians may not understand the terrible long-term consequences of their actions; they may have been bought and paid for, as history has shown to occur numerous times; or they just don't care. What other reasons could there be for these stands? Because two or three large-population drug-infested ultra-liberal counties voted for (marijuana legalization) ... really, give us a break!

The families of Grant County, as all Oregonians, expect their children to go to school without being introduced to dope. With the large influx of drugs into the communities, children will steal their addicted parent's marijuana and bring it to school to share with everyone. The dope always ends up in the hands of the children — always!

Frank C. Gardner  
Fernley, Nev.

### The movie math

To the Editor:

Some time in the last few days, someone put an entry on Facebook about how they missed the theaters that used to be here in John Day. They told how they enjoyed going to the theaters on the weekends with all the family, etc., and they sure wished the theaters were still around.

### Perils of pot?

To the Editor:

Last October Josephine County Circuit Court Judge Wolkes ruled that neither Oregon law pertaining to so called medical marijuana prohibits cities from prohibiting medical marijuana dispensaries in their jurisdictions.

### WHERE TO WRITE

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