



The Promise of Measure 57 Coalition

Individuals and Organizations Working Together to Find a Better Way to Fight Crime

promiseof57@gmail.com

Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs

Human Services Coalition of Oregon

Juvenile Rights Project

National Association of Social Workers, Oregon Chapter

Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs

Oregon Business Association

Oregon Criminal Defense Lawyers Association

Oregon Education Association

Oregon Prevention Education & Recovery Association

Partnership for Safety and Justice

SEIU, Local 503

Self Enhancement, Inc.

Stand for Children

StatesmanJournal

SALEM, OREGON

March 15, 2009

Addiction treatment can save state money in long run

Lawmakers debate boost in funding despite recession
(excerpted)

By Peter Wong
Statesman Journal

They took different roads to recovery.

But the stories told by Robert Howe and Deborah "Janie" Marsh at the Capitol last week made one common point to lawmakers looking for cuts — that spending for alcohol and drug abuse treatment is not a losing cause. ...

State Rep. Chip Shields, D-Portland, said there was a reason he organized the hearings.

"We cannot look at Oregon's public safety budget and our human services budget as separate and unrelated," said Shields, who is co-chairman of the public safety subcommittee. "The fact is that they are deeply intertwined, especially when it comes to dealing with substance abuse. ...

Budget problem

Gov. Ted Kulongoski's proposed 2009-11 budget for addiction treatment and mental health within the Department of Human Services is \$844 million, almost \$69 million less than legislative budget analysts estimate is needed to maintain programs. ...

The proposed budget adds money for Oregon State Hospital staffing — prodded by a federal investigation — but also cuts deeply into state support for community alcohol and drug treatment programs and mental health services. DHS oversees them, but the money goes to counties, health plans, nonprofit agencies, tribes — and the Department of Corrections and the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission, which oversees drug courts. ...

Link to savings

David Rogers, executive director of the Partnership for Safety and Justice based in Portland, said there is another reason for concern.

"These hearings confirm there is a direct link between addiction treatment and mental health services and crime prevention," said Rogers, whose organization supports alternatives to prison. "If we make decisions on funding without understanding those connections, we're making ineffective decisions about policy that are likely to be costly." ...

For every dollar spent on treatment, the Department of Human Services estimates savings of \$4 to \$7 in other costs. ...