

Substance Abuse and Antisocial Behavior

What we need to do.

Presentation given by Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson
to the Greater Gresham Area Prevention Partnership

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Substance abuse and anti-social behavior is a very serious problem in our state and we have been trying to deal with the problem in so many different ways. I just came from the ground breaking for the new Rockwood Courthouse. In the first year, this courthouse predicts it will process 38,000 cases. How I wish that we could prevent some of those cases from even getting to court. Substance abuse takes a huge toll on society and costs us billions of dollars. If we could prevent all substance abuse in our state, we wouldn't have a revenue shortfall at the state level and here's why.

- Substance abuse costs the state of Oregon almost \$5.4 billion per year in lost productivity and expenses to the criminal justice, child welfare and health care systems.
- Substance abuse drives our criminal justice system.
 - **\$967 million per year** is the result of just in violent, property, and consumption-related crimes (shoplifting, dine & dash); there are expenditures on alcohol and drug enforcement laws, criminal justice, and social welfare programs; and there are property damages attributed to motor vehicle crashes and fires.
 - In Multnomah County last year, 62% of the men who were arrested – for any offense – tested positive for drugs at the time of their arrest.
 - 72.5% of those arrested for property crimes and 50% of those arrested for violent crimes had drugs in their system when they were arrested.
 - And over half of those arrested with drugs in their system reported that they had been arrested more than once in the past year.
- Substance abuse also fuels our health care system.
 - Substance abuse costs the state approximately **\$506 million in medical costs** attributed to the adverse health effects related to alcohol and drug abuse, as well as the administrative costs associated with these medical services.
 - The National Institute of Health estimates that the costs of alcohol and drug abuse are comparable to, or exceed the costs of other major health problems such as cancer, diabetes and smoking.

- What is disturbing is that alcohol use among Oregon's 8th graders is 76% higher than the national average and locally in our schools 37% of our teens have used alcohol in the last 30 days – according to one of the youth surveys (Oregon Wellness Survey).
- In Multnomah County a young person who is caught with a fifth of alcohol for the first time, will likely only receive a letter in the mail addressed to the parents. Remember – 37% of our teens have had a drink in the last 30 days – so if he/she gets caught – there are few consequences.
- Almost 18% of our young people 18-25 years old are using prescription drugs for recreation. That is the highest non-medical use of prescription drugs in the US. Unused medicine is readily available to our youth. Advertisements on television don't help this problem. 400 people die annually in Oregon because prescription drug overdoses.

Oregon is a medical marijuana state. Marijuana is an illegal drug – yet a legally prescribed medication.

“The 2010 (Monitoring the Future (MTF)) Survey, released in December by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the University of Michigan, showed an increase in marijuana use among all grades measured in the survey, 8th, 10th and 12th graders. In all, about one in 16 high school seniors admits to daily pot use. Meanwhile, 24 percent of teens say they've used marijuana in the past year, up from 21.5 percent three years ago.”

- However, we KNOW that helping people with treatment and recovery saves money. A 2000 Kaiser Permanente study found that when people are given treatment:
 - Total medical costs declined 26%
 - Inpatient health care costs declined 35%
 - Emergency room costs declined 39%
- In other words, treatment saves money – both state dollars and private sector dollars.
- Interventions, as early as the prenatal stage and as late as adolescence, can have a profound effect. It is possible for Oregon to significantly lower the rates of substance use, crime, academic failure, domestic violence, teenage pregnancy, and physical illness, at the same time that we improve Oregon's economic productivity and reduce public and private expenses that arise from these problems.

- Problem behaviors, including substance abuse, develop over time; if children exhibit aggression, have difficulty managing strong feelings, and have weak academic skills, they can begin to have trouble bonding with peers at school. By early adolescence, many of these children begin to drift towards other troubled peers, and to experiment with problem behaviors. The earlier this begins, the more chronic and serious problems become throughout adolescence.

This issue affects all of us and is not someone else's problem. It is our problem. Because it is affecting all of us – our kids, our community, our economy – *our very future* - I am here today to ask 'all of us' to help take action.

- There is no magic bullet; it comes down many small programs, policies and interventions in families, in schools and in communities.
- We are here today to celebrate some success along these lines. In East County I think we have found some ingenious ways to solve problems. I am on the board for Human Solutions and we are very excited to be building a 'multi-service center' in Rockwood. The building will be a one stop shop for families in need and it's is a great example of the kind of collaboration we can use to combat substance abuse.
- So part of our solution is working together. We need everyone – it's a big problem and it will not be solved by state money because there is no state money. Our deficit is 3.2 billion dollars. Parents, teens, teachers, social workers, pastors, health care providers; everyone needs to be aware and working on this.
- At the state level we have a very active Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission, on which I serve. Attorney General John Kroger is taking strong leadership on this commission and I foresee great strides in the state's emphasis on alcohol and drug. We are attempting to look at what a model prevention program would look like in a community. Obviously, each community and its needs are different, but the framework looks the same. Ideally, you would have:
 - Prenatal care for all women.
 - Crisis relief nurseries to help those families that are challenged.
 - Head Start and quality early childhood education
 - Parenting classes for families with elementary and middle school children

- Positive behavior support programs in elementary school
- After school activities
- Mentoring
- Community development
- We were recently here at Mt Hood Community College taking a look at the Four Cities Peer Court you all have been working on – it was a great discussion and a terrific way to look at a big policy through the lens of a youth program.

Here are a few things that East County – my senate district and the surrounding area should look at:

- All our school districts should *us a cohesive prevention curriculum* that touches every grade level
- All our districts should link together for a consistent policy and process for managing students who are using, selling or skipping school to use. We have to keep kids in school. It is our best way to keep kids safe.
- *Every school* should have after school programs.
- All our Police departments should work with schools
- All our Police departments should provide well advertised systems for turning in prescription drugs.
- Our county juvenile system should partner with schools for more youth court and restorative justice programs – so we can get kids attention the first time and help them stay focused and in school.

At the state level:

Our new governor is saying some interesting things about re-thinking what we are spending money on. **Pay attention to the legislative conversation.** I need your feedback – I need your advocacy – I need your emails and I may need to call on you to testify! If there is a chance to get funding for schools, for prevention and treatment we need to be working together on that! Prevention, prevention, prevention!! That is my mantra. But then I am a public health nurse and we really focus on prevention.

At the regional east county level

ALL prevention money that this community has to work with is from the Greater Gresham Area Prevention Partnership (GGAPP). That funding ends in September. The resources to continue to actually do prevention work like the Peer Court, the upcoming Youth Conference

– the meeting with the commission – it will all go away. Additionally, if the state does reframe the prevention funding process this community needs to be ready to put those resources to work immediately. GGAPP is the momentum and the leadership ready to move. Unless we all get behind the next funding proposal that the Police Activities League and the GGAPP leadership team plans to submit in February it's over. **Sign a membership form before you leave today and write down what you are willing to do.**

At the local person to person level

Resources are tight; we have less staff and thus less time to work on this HUGE complex substance abuse problem.

Substance abuse prevention needs to start before birth and go through to senior citizens! Prevention is prevention is prevention. So as we work on bullying, homelessness, early childhood education, school climate, family support, food security – please believe me - everything we can do to protect kids and families from harm – is substance abuse prevention.

- At this point, people often despair that we don't have enough money to do all these things. That is true. But if we can begin to direct just a little bit more funding to prevention – through fully funding our county prevention offices and supporting the good people like you who do this work, we can make real strides against substance abuse in our community.

In closing: Thank you for being here today. It is terrific to see folks concerned about this issue and taking time to think about its complexity and how they can implement some of the difficult and challenging solutions. Remember; Talk to teens, talk to neighbors and friends, be informed about what the risks to kids are and what the 'inoculations' are. **Be ready to advocate and to volunteer with the coalition.**

We are a community that understands what it takes for a 'Drug Free Community Future'.