

Written Testimony of Professor Keith Humphreys, Stanford University to the December 4 hearing of the Joint Legislative Committee on Addiction and Community Safety, Oregon.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer evidence to the committee. I am a Stanford Professor of Psychiatry and former Bush and Obama White House drug policy advisor who has studied addiction for 35 years. This testimony describes the public health and safety benefits of programs that use the leverage of the criminal justice system to encourage people with substance use disorders to enter treatment and/or reduce their substance use.

The largest and longest-term study to compare the effects of mandated versus voluntary addiction treatment examined the outcomes of 2,095 racially diverse patients.¹ Outcomes one year and five years after treatment entry showed that the mandated patients did as well or better than voluntary patients on outcomes such as ceasing substance use, having a job, and not being arrested. Their satisfaction with treatment was also similar to voluntary patients.

This study's findings parallel those found in studies of drug courts. For example, a widely-cited randomized trial² found that compared with typical community supervision, arrested individuals in drug court were almost three times as likely to receive addiction treatment and 19% less likely to have been rearrested two years later.

These studies indicate that there are benefits to not waiting for an individual to spontaneously decide to seek addiction treatment before intervening. The large and increasing number of overdose deaths in Oregon show that many people will never get to this point before they die. Yet in most cases, the system had windows of opportunity that could have been used as

leverage to induce treatment seeking, for example when the person was arrested for vandalism, shoplifting, burglary, vehicular theft or other crimes.

It is also worth noting that even without a treatment requirement, regular monitoring of substance use by people on probation and parole coupled with swift, certain, and fair consequences for alcohol and drug use can yield large public health and safety benefits. The 24/7 Sobriety program for individuals convicted of repeat alcohol-related crimes (typically drunk driving) monitors alcohol use continuously, imposing immediate arrest and an overnight jail stay for drinking. Research by RAND Corporation³ has shown that the program significantly reduces intoxicated driving and domestic violence arrests and also reduces the risk of mortality of enrolled offenders by 50% over 5 years.

In summary, evaluation research across multiple populations and settings show that the criminal justice system can play a productive role in helping addicted individuals initiate treatment and recovery, with benefits to their health as well as benefits to their families and communities.

References

1 Kelly, JF, Finney JW, & Moos RH. (2005). Substance use disorder patients who are mandated to treatment: characteristics, treatment process, and 1- and 5-year outcomes. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, 28, 213-223.

2 Gottfredson, D.C., Najaka, S.S., & Kearley, B. Effectiveness of drug treatment courts: Evidence from a randomized trial. (2003). *Criminology and Public Policy*, 2, 171-196.

3 An overview of RAND's research on 24/7 Sobriety programs is available on line at <https://www.rand.org/health-care/projects/24-7.html>