As Oregon Moves to Decriminalize Drugs and Emphasize Rehabilitation Over Incarceration, Addiction Treatment Centers Like Legacy Healing Center Wonder if Other States Will Follow

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Margate, FL - Criminalizing drug use and possession ? the idea behind the US ?War on Drugs? - has been the way states have approached non-violent drug offenses for many years. This policy treats people in possession of drugs as criminals and while some programs treat substance use disorder (SUD) in the criminal justice system, the policy also creates significant problems and barriers to treatment for people in need of help.

According to a National Drug Intelligence Center report, drug use has cost American society an estimated $193 billion. Of that, $113 billion is related to criminal justice system costs. The same report went on to estimate that the total cost of just treating substance use disorder was a mere $14.6 billion.

In 2016, more than 80 percent of the 1.5 million drug-related arrests were only for possession, according to the Drug Policy Alliance. The argument is that people being arrested for non-violent drug possession are

people who are suffering from a mental health disorder (addiction) and that what they need is effective addiction treatment, not incarceration.

Oregon is one of the first states to approach non-violent drug offenses differently by helping to give people with SUD greater options that focus on providing healthcare instead of treating the problem as a criminal case.

Janie Gullickson went through a severe addiction that took nearly everything away from her. She dealt with homelessness, incarceration, and tremendous family problems before she finally received the addiction treatment that would help her to overcome her SUD. Her experience with the criminal justice system stemming from her substance abuse led her down a path to dramatically change the way that non-violent drug offenses should be handled.

Gullickson took on the role of Executive Director for the Mental Health and Addiction Association of Oregon where she would be one of the most outspoken voices pushing for Measure 110 ? new legislation that aims to decriminalize possession of drugs. Instead of treating drug offenses as criminal, it seeks to address the real problem: the need for addiction treatment that heals the underlying causes of substance abuse in a holistic way.

A report by the Pew Charitable Trusts ? a non-profit organization ? found no link between increased imprisonment and the reduction of drug abuse. Even though prison terms increased between 1988 to 2012, the rate of incarceration for drug offenders rose by over 153 percent.

According to the Justice Policy Institute, an alternative method of approaching non-violent drug offenses in New York where addiction treatment was used over imprisonment, an evaluation of the results revealed significantly positive results including reduced substance abuse, reduced relapse rates, increased employment rates, and significant cost savings due to reduced incarceration rates.

As Oregon changes its stance on non-violent drug possession - opting for effective addiction treatment over incarceration - the hope is that other states will follow their success. Effective addiction treatment that?s offered at accredited addiction treatment centers such as Legacy Healing Center in South Florida and New Jersey can help to treat the real problems of mental health and substance use disorders.

At Legacy Healing Center, drug addiction treatment is approached holistically. Since people who would face incarceration for drug possession often have problems beyond just drug use such as homelessness, unemployment, and poor health among other things, a whole-patient approach to addiction treatment yields far greater results than incarceration can.

The War on Drugs has revealed that the true victims are the people who are struggling with substance use disorder and mental health issues. Quality addiction treatment centers like Legacy Healing Center aim to help people struggling with addiction to heal trauma and positively transform their lives, not be treated as criminals.

For anyone struggling with addiction or concerned about a family member, help is available 24/7 at (888) 534-2295.

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Legacy Healing Center

Legacy Healing Center - Alcohol & Drug Rehab & Detox is South Florida's #1 resource for drug, alcohol and prescription drug treatment.

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