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Senator Rotundo and other distinguished members of the AFA/CJPS Joint Committee Public Hearing. My name is Jim Lysen and I am from Lewiston. I retired 7 years ago, most recently from a 12-year career as a healthcare administrator.

Only one statistic matters. We lose 2 Mainers a day to the Substance Use Disorder crisis. They are typically friends or family of other Mainers. I lost a nephew whose body was found unfortunately days later from an OD. This is unacceptable!

We need a new approach to this epidemic. How about treating it as a Public Health issue--which in my opinion it has always been-- and "Leading with Love " and making it more about the health of the person to do this, getting them access to treatment programs, not arresting and jailing them. The budget spends over \$200 million locking people up and we cannot get people to help when they need it? This is also unacceptable!

If we were to make this budget a moral document, we must set aside resources to support the many Mainers suffering from Substance Use Disorders. There have been many bills presented to do this. Some take on directly the stigma of Substance Use Disorders. The state needs sustainable funding for comprehensive substance use treatment centers, where people can get access to the recovery support services they need when they want them.

People with Substance Use Disorder need treatment. But incarceration is not treatment. Arrest and incarceration dramatically interrupts an individual's life, including their housing, health care, employment, and social connectedness. Even brief incarceration leads to adverse consequences, including loss of employment and future employment opportunities, poorer physical and behavioral health due to breaks in health care services and treatment, loss of housing and future housing opportunities, and disruptions in family life and social connections.

This must stop and is why the budget must provide resources for the many treatment centers and other options that will safely assist people in crisis.

Thank you for the time.

Jim Lysen