

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Honorable Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Kayla Blackborow. I am a clinical social worker working as a therapist at an addiction medicine clinic in Portland. I am writing to express my opposition to LD 219, a bill to restrict the number of syringes that syringe service programs can distribute. This bill would return us to an outdated model that hurts our community and attempts to put a band aid on a much larger systemic problem.

I work with individuals who use drugs and individuals who are in recovery from substance use disorders. My patients work incredibly hard to build healthy, joyful, and meaningful lives for themselves and their loved ones. I cannot imagine if, in addition to all of the barriers they already face, they also needed to worry about limited access to sterile syringes and therefore increased risk of HIV, Hepatitis C, and other preventable infections.

My patients often experience profound shame related to their substance use, as our society tends to stigmatize their drug use rather than support their needs. The proposed bill further perpetuates stigma that my patients already feel on a daily basis. It is not based in evidence, and it reverts us back to a policy that simply does not work. It will cause harm to the individuals that I serve and place more burden on health care providers and public health workers who will need to treat the downstream impacts of this policy.

I urge you to oppose this bill and instead support policies that have a strong evidence base in supporting our communities and reducing harm for those who use substances.

Kayla Blackborow

Portland resident