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Governor Delays Action on Addiction Crisis until mid-2021

A Complete Retreat From 2018 Pledge to End Oregon's "Public Health Crisis"

Recovery Community Rallies Tomorrow to Demand "Take Action NOW!"

Portland—Dr. Reginald Richardson, executive director of the state [Alcohol & Drug Policy Commission](#), announced at a commission meeting on Thursday that Governor Brown had informed him she planned to take "no action" to end Oregon's untreated addiction crisis for at least another year. On [March 27th, 2018 Governor Brown issued an Executive Order](#) declaring untreated "addiction a public health crisis in Oregon." According to Oregon Health Authority and Center for Disease Control projections, since Governor Brown's announcement, over 3,000 people have died in alcohol-related deaths and from drug overdoses in Oregon.

Governor Brown's decision was announced the same day she called for a temporary ban on vaping in response to two recent deaths. And it follows a [report submitted to the Oregon Legislature 10 days ago by the Criminal Justice Commission](#) which evaluated the efficacy of current state efforts to end the addiction crisis and concluded "Oregon now ranks among the most challenged states in the nation for substance abuse and mental health problems, while at the same time ranking among the worst states for access to care."

"We are profoundly disappointed in Governor Brown's decision to ignore Oregon's worst public health crisis for yet another year," stated Mike Marshall, executive director of Oregon Recovers and a person in long-term recovery. **"Her lack of action will directly result in more Oregonians dying unnecessarily, more kids deposited in our failing foster care system, more young people heading to prison instead of college, and more people losing a safe place to call home. [Untreated addiction already costs the state \\$5.9 billion annually](#)--this lack of action by Governor Brown will add dramatically to that price tag."**

In March 2018, the [Oregon Legislature passed legislation](#) requiring the Alcohol & Drug Policy Commission (ADPC) to develop a comprehensive addiction recovery strategic plan, which is scheduled to be completed by December 2019. Pursuant to that legislation, the [ADPC issued a framework](#) for a new recovery-oriented continuum of care in September 2018; issued an RFP in November 2018 for an outside consultant to lead the planning process; selected JBS International as that consultant in January 2019; and launched a formal planning process in February 2019. In June 2019, Oregon Recovers hired a consulting firm (Hilltop Public Solutions) to assist the ADPC in securing input from stakeholders across the state and to insure the ADPC meets its

mandated deadline of delivering a comprehensive plan in advance of the 2020 legislative session.

“For the last 18 months we have witnessed an extraordinary collaboration between treatment providers, county public health workers, healthcare companies, and recovery community leaders to support this unprecedented planning process. For the Governor to turn her back on this coordinated effort without consulting anyone on the ADPC, any of the state treatment providers, or any of the activists within the recovery community is an abandonment of leadership. People voted for her because she said ending Oregon’s addiction crisis was one of her top priorities,” said Tony Vezina, co-chair of Oregon Recovers, and a person in long-term recovery.

In recent weeks, the City Councils of Bend, Medford, Eugene and Portland—as well as the County Commissions of Jackson, Lane, and Multnomah—have considered and/or issued proclamations supporting the Governor’s 2018 declaration that untreated addiction was a public health crisis and supporting the planning efforts of the ADPC. Additionally, over 1,000 people have participated in Walks for Recovery in Bend, Medford, and Eugene.

Oregon Recovers will hold the 2nd annual Portland Walk for Recovery on Saturday, September 28th. Over 700 people are expected to attend, and the event is on track to raise \$100,000 for Oregon Recovers’ efforts to dramatically improve Oregon’s fractured and incomplete addiction recovery system.

“Our original goal was to create a day of pride for the recovery community. But the Governor's decision forces us to shift our focus because we need her, and all of our elected leadership, to take action now. This is just not how we expect our leaders to respond in a crisis,” stated Se-ah-dom Edmo, co-chair of Oregon Recovers, and the adult child of a person in recovery.