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## QuickPoint! - Oregon's Measure 110 needs more accountability for drug users

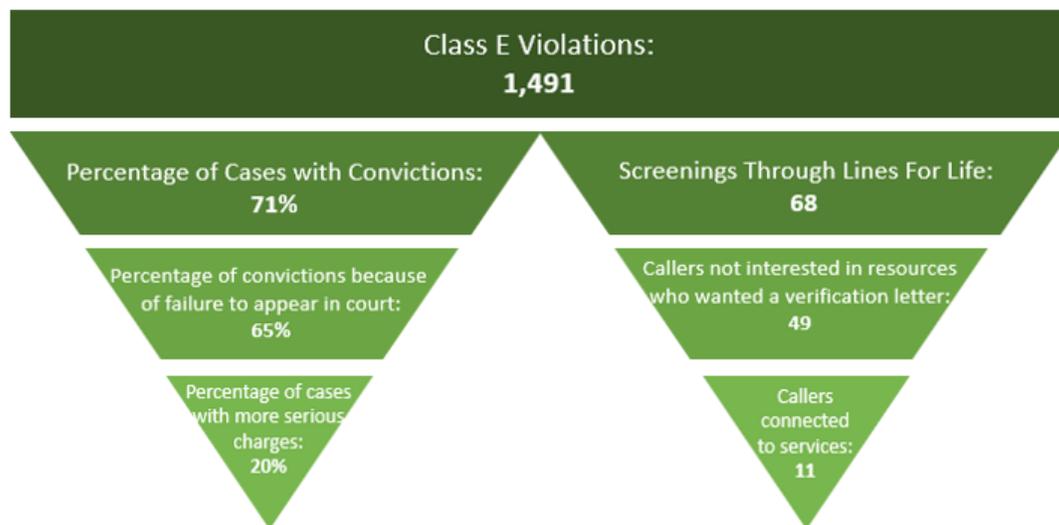
By Rachel Dawson

Nearly a year after Oregon's drug decriminalization experiment began, results point to fewer arrests but little interest in addiction services.

In 2020, Oregon voters approved Measure 110 which decriminalizes small amounts of controlled substances, including meth and heroin, and funds drug addiction treatment and recovery services. It came into effect on February 1, 2021.

As predicted, fewer drug arrests were made in 2021. Instead of earning jail time, those found in possession of drugs are charged with a violation and pay a \$100 fine. Or, they can avoid the fine altogether by participating in a health assessment over the phone.

As of November, there have been 68 total health assessment screenings. However, 49 callers were not interested in resources and merely underwent the assessment to escape the fine, while only 11 people were connected to some kind of addiction or recovery service.



(over)



While M110 is still early in its implementation, this data is telling. What good will pumping millions of dollars into the behavioral health network be if no one's there seeking help?

What's missing in this equation is any kind of personal accountability. Many of those who need help won't seek it out. Drug courts were helpful in this regard because they pushed addicts into treatment which reduced substance use and drug-involved crimes. Officials should consider adding similar "teeth" to this program.

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*Rachel Dawson is a Policy Analyst at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization.*