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MAPPING WHAT MATTERS: COMMUNITY-INFORMED MEASURES FOR OREGON'S SUBSTANCE USE SERVICE SYSTEM

Executive Summary

Oregon continues to face serious substance use and overdose challenges, even as investments and strategies evolve. Overdose remains a leading and preventable cause of death in the state. In this context, improving outcomes requires not only expanding services but also strengthening how the state defines, tracks, and responds to progress. The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) partnered with the American Institutes for Research[®] (AIR[®]) to identify the measurement priorities that matter most to Oregonians across regions and sectors. Through the Measures of Accountability to All People in Policy Solutions (MAAPPS) process, empirical evidence was combined with extensive community input to identify what should be measured, why those measures matter, and what context must accompany them to ensure responsible and meaningful use. By centering lived experience and system realities, MAAPPS translates these priorities into actionable measures that enable the state to more effectively track progress toward improved and more equitable outcomes. This report builds on these insights, presenting a practical set of prioritized measures and implementation considerations to guide OHA's near-term measurement priorities and support longer-term accountability across Oregon's substance use system.

Improving substance use outcomes requires more than expanding services; it requires clear, consistent ways to understand whether those services are reaching communities and making a difference. Measures provide this foundation by enabling the state to track progress, identify gaps, and assess how well the system is performing across communities. Grounded in [OHA's commitment to advancing health equity](#) and aligning systems with the needs of the most

impacted communities, MAAPPS ensures that measurement priorities are shaped by those directly experiencing the state's substance use system. Together, this work establishes a shared, community-informed framework for measurement that supports more informed decision making, strengthens accountability, and guides ongoing system improvement.

The MAAPPS process was designed as a community-centered, multiphase engagement approach that combined existing research with new input from across Oregon's substance use system. The project began by incorporating team members with lived experience to inform the research design and ensure alignment with community needs. The MAAPPS team then conducted an environmental scan, reviewing existing data, policy analyses, and prior statewide efforts to build on established work and avoid duplication.

Building on this foundation, the team conducted community listening sessions with people with lived experience with substance use disorder (SUD) and subject matter expert interviews with individuals representing diverse perspectives and regions across the state. Insights from these engagements were further refined through co-interpretation sessions, where community members and stakeholders collaboratively examined and validated findings, helping to identify initial priorities for measurement.

This work informed three regional, in-person summits held in the Willamette Valley, Southern Oregon, and Eastern Oregon, where participants engaged in structured discussions to review, refine, and prioritize proposed measures. Together, this multiphase approach ensured that the resulting measures, presented below, were grounded in both empirical evidence and the lived experiences of Oregonians across the state.

Findings

Across Oregon, participants consistently emphasized the need for a more coordinated and practical approach to measurement that directly informs decision making and resource allocation. Key findings point to the importance of strengthening system infrastructure—particularly workforce capacity, data systems, and cross-agency coordination—to enable more consistent tracking of priority measures related to prevention, treatment access, recovery support, and harm reduction.

Participants also identified opportunities for immediate action, including clarifying how key measures are defined, better aligning and integrating existing data systems, and prioritizing a focused set of indicators, supported by both feasibility and community input, that can be tracked reliably. Advancing these measures will require OHA to align definitions, strengthen

data infrastructure, and ensure that measurement is consistently applied across counties and systems (see *About the Domains in the full brief*).

In the near term, OHA can take targeted steps to operationalize these priorities, including clarifying key terms, integrating existing data sources, and improving transparency in how funding and outcomes are tracked. Establishing shared expectations for how measures are defined, reported, and used will be critical to ensuring that measurement supports system improvement (see *Cross-cutting themes and How to read each measure in the full brief*).

Participants underscored that measurement must be paired with accountability and clear pathways to action, ensuring that the effort to produce these measures is not in lost. Participants urged that data be used not only to track progress but also to guide decisions, identify gaps in services, and expand equitable, culturally responsive supports for communities most affected by substance use and overdose.

At the same time, several important issues remain unresolved. Summit participants cited ongoing tensions related to balancing state-level standardization with county-level flexibility, ensuring funding stability while directing resources toward under-resourced communities, and the need to improve measurement for individuals not currently captured in existing systems. Finally, the findings presented in this brief are based on facilitated discussions with summit participants and are intended to inform broader decision making. While they provide valuable insight into community priorities and system challenges, they do not represent a comprehensive or representative sample of all perspectives across Oregon. As such, this report should be used as a starting point for action and continued dialogue, with future work focused on refining measures, strengthening data systems, and expanding engagement to ensure sustained progress (see *Limitations and Measures to explore further in the full brief*).

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