

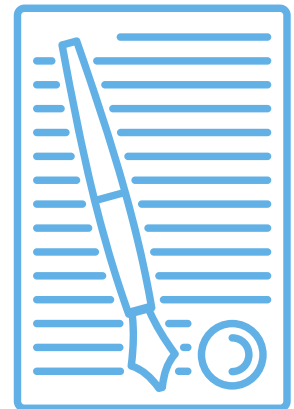
Our current approach to Substance Use Disorders isn't working and we need to take action.

The **Pathways to Recovery Act**, HB 1499, is legislation that would build a *statewide network of outreach, treatment, and recovery support services* that would proactively reach into our rural and urban communities to engage individuals with substance use disorder and connect them with accessible, effective treatment and wraparound services that promote sustained recovery.

HB 1499 would empower the Washington State Health Care Authority, with the assistance of an interdisciplinary working group, to spend two years developing this substance use recovery services plan. At the end of this period and the launch of the plan, simple possession of personal use amounts of drugs would no longer be treated as a crime, and people with substance use disorders would be referred to pathways to recovery instead of jail.

The plan would include:

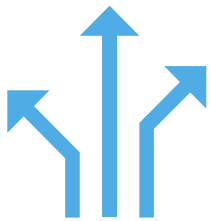
- Field-based outreach and engagement;
- Peer recovery support services;
- Intensive case management;
- Substance use disorder treatment, including evidence-based treatment, promising practices, and innovative approaches;
- Recovery support services including housing, job training, and placement services.



We need a new approach.

In 2018, 1,302 people in Washington died from an overdose, marking a 24 percent increase in a decade. Criminalization has been ineffective as a response to substance use disorder, causing more trauma and creating barriers to recovery. Moreover, the negative consequences of criminalizing drug use have been disproportionately experienced by Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and other marginalized communities even though people use drugs at equal rates across races and ethnicities. Racial disparities in both those who experience criminalization of their drug use, and those who have access to effective outreach, treatment, and recovery support services perpetuate racial inequities across generations of Washington communities.

Law enforcement teams are neither equipped nor trained to provide social services, treatment, or care; it is unreasonable to expect them to do so. Furthermore, incarceration removes access to insurance and behavioral health services, places people with opioid use disorder at extraordinary risk of overdose upon release, and creates criminal records that erect long-term barriers to education, housing, and employment. It does not treat substance use disorder or its root causes. After more than half a century of failing to solve the health and social problems flowing from substance use disorder with punishment, it's time for a new approach.



Give individuals pathways to recovery that are known to work

A clear pathway to recovery for individuals is required. This includes focusing on the unique needs of individuals, providing professional and experienced support, and a community that will invest in this recovery. It requires hope.



Create safe and healthy communities

People need their communities' support, and in turn, our communities are strengthened by having healthy people. When we invest in individuals to reach recovery, we improve our communities by making them a safer environment for us all.