

Amanda Bickley

Regarding HB 2487 through the House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice

January 22, 2024

My name is Amanda Bickley and I am a case manager on a non-medical detoxification unit. I am also the daughter of someone who experienced opiate addiction for many years. I am testifying as I feel people should not need to decide between saving someone's life and being prosecuted.

Our detoxification unit served roughly 650 clients last year for various substances. Approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  of our clients reported using opiates. I spoke with many clients who have had to receive doses of Narcan after an overdose, some of whom have had to be revived several times. They are struggling with their addiction and are often scared to overdose- they do not want to die. They've shared countless stories of losing friends to overdose. They use harm reduction strategies like making sure they have a supply of Narcan and only using opiates when they have someone else around who can administer that Narcan. Many have shared that they are scared to call 911 because they do not want the police involved. If they do call 911, they report they often leave the scene prior to emergency personnel arriving because they do not want to go to jail or receive a legal charge that will affect everything they do the rest of their life, including seeking employment and housing.

As someone who has lived and worked in Kansas their whole life, I'm proud of the recent strides Kansas has made to protect the safety of its citizens, including providing its citizens the opportunity to have a supply of Narcan through the State Opioid Response grant initiative. While my mother was struggling with her opiate addiction, there was no such thing as Narcan for us- if we were worried she overdosed, we would just have to sit helplessly and hope she didn't stop breathing before the ambulance would arrive. My mother's opiates were prescribed, so we did not have to worry about if police showed up. I could not imagine the position people would be put in if they had to worry about receiving legal charges for contacting 911 in this situation. Watching someone stop breathing is beyond scary- the only thing people need to think about is getting help from emergency personnel.

Thank you, Representative Stephen Owens, and members of the committee, for reading my testimony. I appreciate your considering passage of HB 2487.