

Margo Miller

From: Ruth York <ryork@idahofederation.org>
Sent: Sunday, March 8, 2020 3:24 PM
To: martin@senate.idaho.gov; Senator Lee Heider; Senator Abby Lee; Senator Van Burtenshaw; Senator Mark Harris; Senator Regina Bayer; Senator Maryanne Jordan; Senator David Nelson; Margo Miller
Subject: Bill 340a

I am greatly concerned by HB340a. **Most concerning to me is that it is about one center that does not offer the standard of care in adolescent substance abuse treatment.** Senator Souza, Rep. Mendive and Rep. Remington have all indicated this program will be for adolescents with substance use disorder without co-occurring mental health disorders. Residential treatment is not the recommended treatment modality for adolescents with substance use disorder only. The standard of care for this population is community based services, including intensive day treatment. These options exist in Northern Idaho.

Youth need to maintain their education and Good Samaritan offers an immersion in Bible study only. There is no other educational component planned for their youth program. Education is mandatory for youth in Idaho and it is a parent's responsibility to make sure their children maintain their education. A parent could actually be prosecuted for sending their child to a facility with no educational component for up to 4 months. This bill keeps morphing to try to allow this one center to admit teens and I urge you not to allow this unlicensed program to open its doors to a population that should not be in residential care in the first place, and who should not forfeit their education while in treatment. Schooling is a part of all standard of care day treatment and residential programs. It is not just best-practice. It is considered the only-practice in addressing youth substance youth disorder.

Outpatient and Intensive Outpatient Programs exist in Northern Idaho, and residential clinical programs, for those with diagnoses appropriate for this level of care, can be found within an hour of most Northern Idahoans. It is misleading for lawmakers to say or think that teens in N. Idaho have no options and as a result are in danger on the streets. Parents in Northern Idaho, and in fact in all parts of Idaho, can call our office and receive help in finding options that keep their child safe, and these options are covered by insurance and Medicaid and not financially unavailable to families. We keep parents in the driver's seat in selecting what works best for their situation. If that is a faith-based program we would support that 100% and we would caution them that licensing will protect their rights as guardians and their child's rights to a safe and evidence-based treatment environment. We have no affiliation with any programs and are only driven by our understanding of what parents and youth are experiencing when they have a substance use disorder, or mental, behavioral or emotional health challenges.

Other concerns that indicate this program will not prepare youth for a life of sobriety and success are found in looking at the rules for participation at Good Samaritan as stated on their website:

- **No contact with anyone outside of the program (including immediate family) for a minimum of 2-3 weeks** until the program deems it appropriate for them to have contact. *This is a harmful practice for youth in residential care who need to know they are still supported and loved by their family members when a family makes a choice to seek treatment.*
- **Women are not allowed to kiss their husbands throughout their adult treatment but men are allowed to kiss their wives while men are in treatment.** This is one of several rules for women which have no compatible rule for men. Teaching young girls that their rights are different than a male's rights goes against the modern culture females live in. Women like Senator Souza and all the good women of the Senate and House hold their current positions because it was made possible for them to have choices outside of the traditional roles for females that this treatment program promotes.

- **The potential for abuse of women and girls is increased in male-dominated environment.** At Good Samaritan woman and men are being taught that women are supposed to be in service to men and focus their lives in service to their children as well. I don't know any working women or single women who don't focus their lives on their children. Again, please see the website admissions criteria and descriptions of the adult female program, which is twice as long as the male program because women are required to undergo extra training and religious teachings to learn their roles in society before release from the program. If any of this is not found when you look, it will only be because has been taken down or will be taken down as a result of the efforts to push this bill through for this one facility. It was still on the website as of this past weekend.

Lets address the concerns for teenage substance abusers appropriately, safely and with safeguards in place for youth and families. Let's slow down and base decisions like these on the existing substance abuse treatment evidence collected and validated scientifically with non-biased evaluators. Let's ask questions such as:

- **Why is Good Samaritan unwilling to consider licensing unlike every other treatment facility in the state?**
- **Why is Good Samaritan insisting on a residential treatment environment when the standard of care is outpatient which they could easily offer without licensing?** If they are unable to attain a good outcome for youth via outpatient treatment, then national data would indicate they are not enrolling the right population - that is youth with only a substance use disorder and no underlying mental health concerns.

Please give yourselves, families and youth time to find the right solution to a problem where the wrong solutions can result in long term harm to youth and their families.

Ruth York

*Executive Director
Idaho Federation of Families
for Children's Mental Health
704 N. 7th St.
Boise, ID 83702
208-433-8845*