

# PRIME+ Peer Program

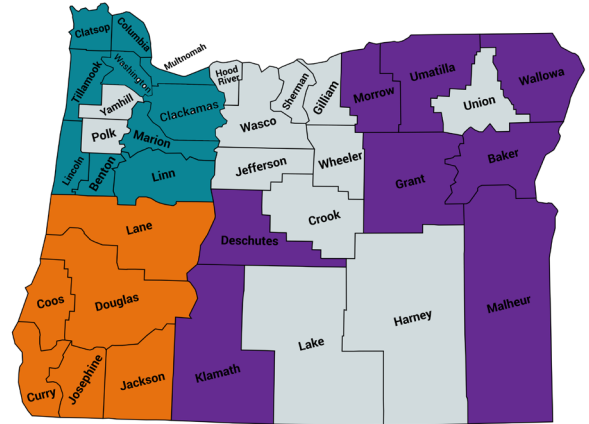
Quarterly Brief | October 2021



## WHAT IS PRIME+?

The PRIME+ Peer Program connects Peer Support Specialists in 24 Oregon counties with people who are at risk of or receiving treatment for overdose, infection, or other health issues related to substance use. PRIME+ peers engage people who may be out of treatment and who are at varying stages of change using a harm reduction approach. Program sites share and learn from one another, build their agency capacity, and engage with a wide range of service providers. Through their work, PRIME+ peers and their agencies are shifting how community members and decision-makers think about substance use and response options.

## COUNTIES SERVED



**1,601** PARTICIPANTS REACHED

January 1 – September 30, 2021

## SHARING SUCCESSES

### Community Outreach

Peers are embedded in hospitals in **Deschutes County** and have now added outreach. Peers visit local areas where unhoused people live or congregate, offer services, and provide harm reduction supplies. The Deschutes team partners with local organizations (syringe exchange, Mosaic Medical van) to offer peer services at syringe exchange events, COVID vaccine events, hepatitis C testing events, and more. Peers support COVID testing and vaccines, discuss HCV testing and treatment, distribute naloxone, and hand out food, clothing, hygiene supplies, and *“anything else participants may need.”*

### Phlebotomy Training

A peer in **Lane County** shared: *“Recently, I was fortunate enough to start a phlebotomy training at work... I'm looking forward to being able to offer this to people that have had a bad experience. If I do draw blood from someone I will be in less of a hurry and more client-focused than the average phlebotomy lab... Even if I don't draw from anyone.... With this knowledge **I am able to inform the people I work with so they can advocate for themselves or so I can help advocate for them in the future.** This way they can avoid the trauma that can often be associated with being a substance user and getting blood drawn.”*



## PRIME TIME: Peers in the News

The **Malheur County** PRIME+ site was featured in the Oregon Public Health Association's (OPHA) Addiction Prevention Spotlight in June. OPHA commended the team's virtual support groups and phone visits that helped participants through the isolation of the pandemic. They also highlighted the team's outreach work, which includes overdose response training and distribution of naloxone and safer use supplies.

## PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT: Telemedicine Collaboration

Peers in **Coos & Curry Counties** contacted the local CCO to connect participants with technology to access telemedicine for buprenorphine through Boulder Care and OHSU HRBR Clinic. The peers then facilitate appointments with providers, assist in picking up medications, and support medication adherence.

*"Boulder Care was brought to my attention when my peer [client] needed to download the Boulder Care app on a smartphone tablet. My peer [client] had neither... I decided to connect with Advanced Health [CCO] to request a Smart Tablet. I connected with someone over the phone, they approved the tablet, and the tablet came in the mail soon after, complete with screen protector and case. **What is even more wonderful is that we are being allowed to utilize this tablet for several of our peers and it is extremely helpful...** [Boulder Care] work[s] hard to get peers the care they need as quickly as they possibly can, treat them wonderfully and peers get their medications the same day."*

*"I had a client who spent a couple days in jail then got released to safe and sober recovery housing. He told me that he did not know if he would be able to stay at [recovery housing] as he felt he was going to go back out and use. I gave him the self-referral number to Boulder Care and within 45 minutes he was doing a video visit with the correct people to get him set up with Suboxone. With the help of community partners, we also got him set back up with OHP within the hour. **About three hours after everything was all said and done our resident manager was able to go get his prescription for Suboxone and he was good to go.**"*