



SOS Press Release in Response to Hearing Examiner Decision

Via Electronic Mail  
December 28, 2020

SOS thanks the Hearing Examiner for recognizing our main educational point for the past 18 months—that installing the proposed MAT clinic, a large Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) or methadone clinic, in the retail core of Sequim will have adverse effects on our community unless properly mitigated.

Findings of fact in the Hearing Examiner's Final Decision state that "worst case ... probable impacts would involve drug dealers attracted to patrons of the MAT clinic...add(ing) to the homeless population, former and current patrons will ... congregate in the vicinity ... take, sell, and purchase illegal drugs and engage in other non-violent crime." The Hearing Examiner further acknowledges that data shows "significant impact on police services in a number of cities."

- "Police Impacts [are] Not Remote or Speculative."
- "The evidence is very compelling that patrons of MAT clinics engage in a high frequency of criminal conduct"
- Sequim Police "Chief Crain testified that only 3-5% of the Sequim population causes problems."
- In contrast, the Hearing Examiner acknowledges that a 13% rate of criminal conduct in a MAT study group, is "significantly higher than that of the Sequim population."

Until now, these impacts have not been acknowledged or adequately studied as a problem for Sequim. Examiner Olbrechts has done the community a great service by recognizing that these impacts are worth considering, and that they require action to reduce their effect on Sequim, which is a small town and therefore likely to suffer disproportionately. Olbrechts acknowledges that it is necessary to reduce these significant negative impacts through a mitigation plan, required as a part of the permitting process. In this, we agree with the Hearing Examiner.

SOS disagrees with the Hearing Examiner in the methods chosen for mitigation. For example:

- The Hearing Examiner considers busing patients in and out of Sequim to be a mitigation. We consider this to be a problem. As stated in the Final Decision: "The climate and isolation of Sequim may also be features that attract a disproportionate share of MAT patients to make Sequim their home."
- A required "Citizen Advisory Committee" would be composed of Tribal Representatives, City Staff, one Drug Treatment Specialist, one Community Member selected by the committee, and is limited to addressing impact on Police and Emergency Services only. In our opinion, this committee is unlikely to advocate for our community.

SOS does not believe these mitigations will have any protective influence for Sequim citizens, visitors, or businesses.

SOS will proceed to Superior Court to ask that a robust, public permitting process be followed. The citizens deserve a procedure that will provide the kinds of evaluations we need to ensure the City of Sequim is not subject to the devastating impacts of Methadone Clinics as seen in other cities. Our Hearing Examiner has acknowledged that these impacts are not speculative or remote. SOS asks for the support of our community as we work to resolve these matters.

The Board of Directors  
Save Our Sequim