

Dr. Robert Marbut, HUD  
Christopher Patterson, HUD Regional Administrator NW Region

RE: Memorandum of Understanding, Transitioning to Treatment First

VIA. Chris Patterson email. [christopher.m.patterson@hud.gov](mailto:christopher.m.patterson@hud.gov)

Dear Sirs:

We are writing to you today to bring you up to date on our efforts to support HUD in encouraging jurisdictions to transition to treatment.

The County of Spokane located on the border with Idaho in the State of Washington is home to the second largest city in the State and the largest city, east of the cascades to Minneapolis. For years we have been considered the Capital of the Inland NW but Boise might be considered the new Capital.

Our geographic location and being part of the State of Washington has turned Spokane County into an attractive destination for illegal drugs, drug addicts, homeless, and those with mental health issues. We are a caring community and have provided services in a greater capacity than surrounding areas, thus a geographical attraction that our taxes and services cannot continue to support without help.

Bordering more conservative states, our state and local watered-down laws also attract nefarious individuals that contribute to drug addiction, homelessness, and mental health issues.

How has this translated into tangible statistics? Spokane County has been the number two jurisdiction for Overdose deaths per capita, IN THE NATION. A recent survey by Greater Spokane Incorporated states that 65% of voters want to leave Spokane. We were home to the largest homeless encampment on the west coast, WSDOT camp. We have historical vacancy rates downtown Spokane in the mid 30% range. Businesses and individuals with financial ability are moving across the border to Idaho, harming our tax base and increasing vacancies. Local real estate residential developers have moved development and investments to greener pastures in other states.

A core group of like-minded individuals saw the executive order that would transition from the Housing First model that has increased homelessness and misery dramatically to a more common-sense model that treats addictions and mental health along with providing housing. When we saw this executive order, we believed that our prayers were answered and that we can now help those that need help.

First thought up by former City of Spokane Council member, Jonathan Bingle, with help we drafted a Memorandum of Understanding, Transitioning to Treatment First. Our goal is/was to present to all Spokane County jurisdictions and ask them to vote to approve. We have succeeded in presenting to all cities in Spokane County, except the City of Spokane which has refused to acknowledge our efforts. We were hoping to provide all signatures to HUD, to show that Spokane County is willing to embrace Treatment when HUD is ready to transition and help our efforts.

As both of you know, the ideology in Washington does not believe in what HUD is doing, per the lawsuit by Governor Ferguson and Attorney General Brown. Those of us that dug deep enough know that this is all about money and not what works. We have the same problem here in Spokane with our City Council and Mayor. Our efforts are being handicapped by an ideology that is unscientific and produces metrics like Spokane being the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest Overdose deaths in the nation. The only positive is that we are not Seattle.

Not only have we been handicapped by state and local political ideology, but our leading organizations will not publicly support the MOU due to fear of repercussions. Despite these hurdles, we have found major success but have failed to bring you all the signatures.

Let's start with the positive...here are the jurisdictions that have signed the MOU. The MOU with signatures is attached.

- The City of Airway Heights
- The City of Liberty Lake
- The City of Millwood
- The City of Medical Lake
- The City of Deer Park
- The City of Cheney

Here are the jurisdictions that we provided a presentation but have not voted on the MOU.

- The City of Spokane Valley
- Spokane County

Here is the jurisdiction that would not allow us to present the MOU, thus would not acknowledge our efforts.

- The City of Spokane

Here is the core group that engaged in drafting and presenting the MOU, Transitioning to Treatment.

- Chud Wendle, Director of the Hutton Settlement
- Jonathan Bingle, former City of Spokane Council member
- Sheriff John Nowels
- County Prosecutor, Preston McCollam
- Sheldon Jackson, business owner Spokane.

We would like to thank you for your efforts and for allowing us to participate in your presentation to Spokane. All the jurisdictions above were invited to participate and hopefully listened.

Sincerely,

Sheldon Jackson, [Sheldon@selkirkdev.com](mailto:Sheldon@selkirkdev.com)

Jonathan Bingle, [jonathan@jonathanbingle.com](mailto:jonathan@jonathanbingle.com)

Sheriff John Nowels, [jnowels@spokanesherriff.org](mailto:jnowels@spokanesherriff.org)