

## Laxon, Lindsay

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**From:** Susan Wiswell <susanwiswell@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 30, 2022 10:20 AM  
**To:** Laxon, Lindsay  
**Subject:** Court-Ordered Treatment for Substance Use Disorder

**This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.**

The court should not order treatment for substance use disorder. People afflicted by this disorder should have access to treatment but should not be coerced into it. Our state and many others went way too far down the slippery slope of medical coercion with COVID-related mandates. That must not be allowed to happen again.

Individual Constitutional rights must not be infringed in the absence of criminal charges, and these people have not been charged with a crime. The Fourth Amendment codified into law the right to be secure in one's person against being bodily seized in the absence of a warrant issued for probable cause. The Fifth Amendment codified into law that a person is not to be deprived of liberty without due process of law. Court-ordered treatment, in the absence of even allegations of crime, much less conviction, violates both amendments.

It is both unjust and unethical to force unwilling participants to accept treatment when others who wish to obtain treatment languish on wait lists due to inadequate community resources. Willing participants will be much more motivated and more likely to benefit from treatment than those coerced into treatment. In the absence of "buy-in," recidivism will increase. At best, coercion may result in lip service and temporary behavioral compliance, but these individuals are likely to return to their former way of life after discharge. Their decreased tolerance to such substances following a period of abstinence will increase their risk of overdose. Coercion does not change hearts.

Susan Wiswell, RN, BSN (retired)