

Legislative Testimony-SB 1580

Senate Health Care, Human Services and Rural Health Policy Committee

Friday, February 3, 2012

Dear Chair Monnes-Anderson and Committee Members:

I am Craig Opperman-President/CEO of Looking Glass Youth and Family Services in Eugene,

Vice-President of Public Affairs for Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs.

I am very enthusiastic about Governor and Legislature vision for Health Care Transformation.

Breaking down barriers and using creative, bold approaches to health care holds great promise and opportunity.

I am concerned that this opportunity may be lost if we are not strategic and inclusive in our planning.

While physical health care funding is an ocean compared to the lake of behavioral health care funding, please do not underestimate the exponential saving power of that smaller pool.

The Governor's story of a \$400 air conditioner saving \$50,000 in emergency room costs for an elderly congestive heart failure patient is a perfect example.

We don't need to hire and train new teams of workers to support and intervene in Community Healthcare Homes and Wellness Centers. We need to communicate, train and coordinate with the workers that are already out there.

Right now, as we sit here, there are hundreds of community treatment specialists, counselors and therapists doing mental health and alcohol and drug treatment services in homes with children and families. They know if a parent is not taking their diabetes medication, if they need meds for depression to avoid a suicide attempt, or if there is substance abuse to address.

They know if their teenage client is worried about their grandmother with a heart condition living in a hot upstairs apartment.

We simply need to ensure that these workers are empowered and connected to the physical health care system in a meaningful way. The cost savings and return on this investment would be significant.

But if Behavioral Health Care is not fully involved in the design and implementation of the CCO's and this new system, we will miss this opportunity.

Please ensure that CCO's are accountable, transparent and inclusive.

Thank you.