



DISABILITY RIGHTS OREGON

March 15, 2013

TO: Rep. Carolyn Tomei, Chair
House Committee on Human Services and Housing
FR: Bob Joondeph, Executive Director
RE: HB 3332

Disability Rights Oregon strongly supports passage and funding of HB 3332.

Advocates for improved community mental health services have long agreed with policy makers and providers who recognize that adequate housing is a key ingredient for maintaining individuals in their communities, avoiding crisis and minimizing the need for expensive in-patient treatment. Despite this agreement, Oregon struggles to develop enough housing resources to meet the need.

Adequate housing opportunities are necessary to decrease the rate of homelessness, reduce contacts with the criminal justice system and reduce our reliance on private and state hospital beds. HB 3332 would establish a thoughtful and targeted approach to solving Oregon's longstanding need for more housing and community supports.

Efforts to "bend the cost curve" of health services requires a smarter use of our resources. The same principle applies to mental health. HB 3332 will help develop the infrastructure we need to minimize the use of costly hospital beds and, in doing so, honor the civil rights of individuals who are entitled to receive services in the least restrictive, most integrated setting.

DRO thanks NAMI Oregon for bringing this legislature forward and we urge the committee to give it full consideration.