

Testimony on SB 823
Submitted by Providence Health & Services
Senate Health & Human Resources Committee
Tuesday, April 9, 2013

Chair Monnes-Anderson, and members of the committee, I'm Dave Underriner, the incoming CEO of Providence Health & Services – Oregon.

We thank Senator Peter Courtney for bringing this important bill to the Legislature, and for raising awareness of how we, as a state, care for those with all forms of behavioral health issues.

In each of our Providence facilities statewide, we see patients on a daily basis with a range of behavioral health challenges. Our front line professionals can attest first hand that behavioral health care in this state is fragmented and uncoordinated, and is placing great strains on our overall health care delivery system. Every three years we conduct community health needs assessments in our five service areas. In each of the past two assessments, behavioral health needs have been identified as one of the top three unmet health needs.

Providence has a long history of providing behavioral health services. In 1861, the Sisters of Providence opened the first mental health care facility in the Washington Territory. Providence Behavioral Health Services approaches mental health and substance use treatment using an interdisciplinary approach that focuses on the whole person. We offer a comprehensive range of treatments to help people recover and regain control of their lives.

Our array of behavioral health services is the largest of any one health system in the state:

- We provide 95 percent of all acute care psychiatric treatment for children under 10 years old and approximately 42 percent of the same care for adolescents.
- We are one of three providers in the state providing partial hospital services to adults. We are also the largest provider of partial hospital care for eating disorder patients in the state – successfully preventing the need for residential care for approximately 70 percent of the patients who come through our program.
- We work directly with our primary care providers and partner facilities using TelePsych services to assist in early identification and response to those in need of mental health or substance use treatment.

Providence has made behavioral health, including substance use treatment, a primary focus for our community health improvement plans:

- We have partnered with more than 20 community based agencies through grants and collaborative activities to work to improve behavioral health services. Partners have included Siskyou Community Healthcare, La Clinica Del Valle, Chehalem Youth and Family Services, NAMI, Lutheran Family Services, Clatsop Behavioral Health and George Fox University Counseling Center.
- More recently we collaborated with Oregon Community Foundation and Kaiser Permanente to award \$1.2 million in transformational grants to four community based behavioral health and substance abuse facilities. This funding is aimed at fully integrating behavioral health into the fabric or more traditional health care delivery.

Senate Bill 823 establishes a solid framework for addressing the gaps in Oregon's health care system and providing needed services in the community that would build a more comprehensive and coordinated response to behavioral health issues throughout Oregon.

As a health care system that includes eight hospitals statewide, we are most encouraged by the prospects of a coordinated care model that could reduce the need for expensive emergency department visits and higher levels of care for this vulnerable population.

We suggest that the legislation can be further improved by alignment and linkage to the developing Coordinated Care Organizations (COOs) and the delivery models they are putting into place. These should be seen as complementary systems. Alignment with COOs also allows coordination of quality and outcomes assessment for the changes outlined in this bill.

Taking the current labyrinth of Oregon mental health services and turning them into a comprehensive system that serves the needs of all Oregonians, and particularly its children, is a critical issue. It will take all of us – health care, social service and government entities – to come together to make needed reforms and find new ways to work together. Providence wants to be a trusted partner in this effort.

Providence looks forward to working with Senator Courtney, legislative leaders and the Oregon Health Authority on this important bill. Thank you again, and I'm happy to answer any questions.