



DISABILITY RIGHTS OREGON

April 5, 2013

TO: Rep. Sara Gelser, Chair
House Committee on Education

FR: Bob Joondeph, DRO Executive Director

RE: HB 3474

Disability Rights Oregon supports passage of HB 3474.

General health screenings for students can play an important role in preventive care and early treatment of medical and dental problems. In the same vein, group screening for mental health and chemical dependency symptoms can make an enormous difference in indentifying needs that can be effectively addressed at an early stage.

Oregon's health care transformation process is working to integrate mental health and physical health services because of clear evidence that addressing both types of health needs improves overall well-being. Similarly, under Oregon's parity law and the mandates of the Affordable Care Act, health insurance must cover mental health services.

We at DRO recognize that stigma persists against mental health symptoms and treatment. We believe, however, that approaching routine, group mental health screening like any other health screening can help to normalize the practice while improving the health of our young people. Parents, of course, retain the right to op-out of any screening, which we feel provides adequate protection for family rights.

Thank you for this opportunity to voice support for HB 3474.