



ASSOCIATION OF OREGON COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

Addictions • Mental Health • Developmental Disabilities

Cherryl L. Ramirez
Executive Director
cramirez@aocweb.org

Diana L. Bronson
Executive Assistant
dbronson@aocweb.org

Andrew J. Smith
Legislative Liaison
asmith@aocweb.org

Sarah Jane Owens
Developmental Disabilities Spec.
sjowens@aocweb.org

Chris Siegner, President
Harney Behavioral Health

David Hidalgo, 1st Vice President
Multnomah Health and Addiction Services

Janet Holland, 2nd Vice President
Douglas County Health and Social Services

Silas Halloran-Steiner, Secretary/Treasurer
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Tillamook Family Counseling Center

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Center for Human Development, Inc.

Wallowa County
Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness

Washington County Behavioral Health &
Developmental Disabilities Division

February 17, 2014

TO: Chair Greenlick and Members of the House Health Care Committee

FROM: Cherryl Ramirez, Executive Director, Association of Oregon
Community Mental Health Programs

RE: Support of SB 1577A

The Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP) supports SB 1577A, sections 1-3 requiring sheriffs and municipal police departments to adopt written policies relating to missing vulnerable adults. AOCMHP's membership includes 32 Community Developmental Disability Programs (CDDPs) across Oregon, which are often the first contacts in the community for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

CDDPs help assure the protection and safety of over 12,000 Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) in collaboration with providers and families. Due to the vulnerability of individuals with I/DD who often have limited communication skills, it is imperative that we respond as quickly as possible. When a person with I/DD goes missing or is in trouble, law enforcement is one of the first partners to be notified by a CDDP. CDDPs also work directly with multi-disciplinary teams to help prepare local communities to quickly find missing vulnerable adults, youth and children. These partners may have pictures of individuals, or a plan that helps to identify how long a person can safely be out of the home before they would notify police.

Prior planning and coordination are critical for improving our responses to missing individuals. Unfortunately, not all communities have adopted consistent, written protocols for responding to the reports of missing individuals. Developing consistent, written procedures will assist police and sheriff departments to identify when it is critical to start looking for an individual, who to contact, and most importantly, to locate the missing person quickly. AOCMHP, as well as local CDDPs are willing to assist in the development of these policies, provider education, and work with law enforcement to assure the health and safety of people with disabilities living in their communities. We urge your support of SB 1577 A.