



ADDICTIONS AND MENTAL HEALTH DIVISION

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Date February 5, 2015

TO: The Honorable Senator Sara Gelser, Chair www.oregon.gov/OHA/mentalhealth
Senate Human Services and Early Childhood Committee

FROM: Pam Martin, Director
Addictions and Mental Health Division
Oregon Health Authority

SUBJECT: SB 229-Consumer Advisory Council compensation

Chair Gelser and members of the committee: I am Pam Martin, Director of the Addictions and Mental Health (AMH) Division of the Oregon Health Authority. I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 229, which seeks to allow AMH to compensate members of the Oregon Consumer Advisory Council (OCAC) for participation in Council and sub-committee meetings.

AMH brought this bill forward so we can remove a barrier to inclusive and broad participation by consumers who serve on the Advisory Council. This change is supported by AMH's philosophy and policy that consumers should be reimbursed for serving in official advisory capacity to AMH. The current language in ORS 430.073 states members "...are not entitled to compensation or reimbursement expenses..." and is in conflict with AMH's current ability to reimburse consumers for participation on other AMH advisory committees.

When considering appointments to the Council, ORS 430.073 directs AMH to "strive to balance the representation according to geographic areas of the state and age." In keeping with this directive, AMH has appointed individuals to the Council from the far reaches of Oregon.

Individuals with mental health and substance use disorders have higher rates of poverty than individuals without a behavioral health disorder. Providing expenditure reimbursement and compensation for participation on OCAC is vital to ensuring meaningful participation by consumers of behavioral health services and their family members.

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otherwise provided by law, all members of state boards and commissions, including those employed in full-time public service, may receive actual and necessary travel or other expenses actually incurred in the performance of their official duties within the limits provided by law or by the Oregon Department of Administrative Services under ORS 292.210 .”

We are currently not allowed to pay stipends or reimbursements for travel expenses for members of OCAC. The Council is composed of appointed members from across the state. If this concept is not approved, participation in OCAC will continue to be a financial burden for members and broad representation will be negatively impacted. Accordingly, AMH urges passage of SB 229 as it will remedy this financial burden to Council members and bring OCAC in line with statute that directs agencies to provide stipends and travel reimbursement to members of Oregon public commissions, committees and councils.

I offer myself as a resource to the committee, and I thank you for this opportunity to testify.