

House Committee on Human Services and Housing

February 25, 2015

HB 2029

Chair Keny-Guyer and members of the committee;


211info is an independent nonprofit agency that helps health and human services work better for everyone, making communities stronger. We value innovation and effectiveness in connecting people with programs that address food, housing, health care, employment and other health and human services needs. When communities are experiencing hard times, 211info provides accurate, unbiased referrals and advocacy via telephone, text, email and an online database of over 50,000 services.

Last year we received over 400,000 contacts, including more than 111,000 contacts in our call center. Seventy percent of the people who called us reported income at or below the federal poverty level. Our specialists provide resource information across Oregon, helping people understand their options so that they can receive assistance quickly and efficiently.

The top caller needs across Oregon are assistance in paying for housing, heat, electricity and food. Our clients experiencing poverty, are struggling to stay in their homes and to feed themselves and their children. For families, TANF is the key to preventing homelessness. It provides the bare minimum that may allow families to have shelter and heat -- the stability necessary for parents to find jobs, participate in training programs, and make sure their children are safe, warm, well-fed and able to learn in school. Nonprofits such as food pantries and clothes closets help with other necessities like diapers, soap and warm clothing, but TANF and SNAP (food stamps) are the foundation for families working hard to achieve the self sufficiency they are so determined to secure.

I would like to introduce you to three 211info employees whose excellent work and deep level of service comes from their hard work, in-depth training and personal knowledge of poverty.

Sincerely,



Emily Berndt

Director of Partnerships

211info

503.416.2617