



OREGON  
*Alliance*  
of Children's Programs

HB 2948 - SUPPORT  
Hearing

10 March 2015

House Health Care Committee

Dear Chair Greenlick and Committee Members,

I am Janet Arenz, Executive Director of the Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs. We are a statewide nonprofit organization representing 45 providers, who deliver \$223 million in services to over 100,000 children each year. Additionally, these providers employ 5500 individuals, with \$152 million in annual payroll.

Nearly half of the membership in the Alliance provides a behavioral health service (addiction recovery and mental health). Some of them will be offering comment on this bill today.

I am writing on behalf of the association membership in support of HB 2948.

Aligning disclosures of patient information in Oregon which are allowable under federal law -- particularly when we understand that it can enhance treatment and support for patients -- only makes good sense.

It is an ongoing challenge to find the balance between need to share information for good patient care, patient involvement in their care and treatment and privacy, understanding of the roles and risks of patient and provider and supporting staff, and criminal and civil liability risk.

This tension means providers tend to go to the lowest level of disclosure or most restrictive interpretation. **Given that Oregon's law is already more restrictive than federal law, we could be keeping quiet compounding critical information that could enhance informed care and outcomes.**

Our concern in evaluating this bill was whether there would result clear enough distinctions for patient privacy and disclosure of information that would not put either at risk. Establishing that clarity will be important in the work resulting from this bill. We believe it can be done to protect all parties.

To that comment, we would add that victims of domestic violence can be at risk of perpetrators who would seek behavioral health information about these family members. Again, thoughtful implementation can still provide protection where it is needed.

Thank you for your work on this bill, we hope you will move it forward.

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