

Dear Members of the House Committee on Health Care,

I am writing to urge you to support HB 2948, 2022, and 2023 so that families who have children with complex mental health conditions are supported in meeting their needs.

I am a single parent, I work full time, and spend most of my 'off' time advocating for my child's health care.

My child is 14 and is currently diagnosed with Depression and Anxiety. He has attempted suicide four times in the past two years. He has been in a residential setting two separate years. I have been turned away at the hospital because he doesn't seem 'suicidal' because he was too calm, only to return to a different hospital the next day after AGAIN calling all of our resources to make sure he is admitted. I have seen him shuffle through the system because he isn't high need, but his needs are high enough that he repeatedly ends up suicidal. I have advocated for him tirelessly to finally, after several years, getting him the services he needs. Through trial and error I have fought, FOUGHT, with his health care providers to get him extra help. No parent should ever experience what I have. All kids deserve to live, and deserve to get help

What we really need is extra help to navigate the system and for services to go to those who need them. We need our children to learn tools to manage their illness. We need to learn those tools too.

I have hopes for my child like most parents have: that he may live his life with opportunities to discover what he will be when he grows up and be supported throughout his childhood in meeting the potential for a good life. I don't want him to be a story on the news.

When mental health care has barriers at every turn, it is hard for us to be successful in meeting our child's needs. We want expert health care providers that help us learn about our child's conditions and guide the design of a treatment plan that evolves as he grows up and new needs arise. We want those providers to see us as the most important members of our child's treatment team and who keep critical communication channels open, especially when our child is most fragile and at risk.

When we experience a crisis that leads us to the hospital, we want not to be turned away. We are there because we need help and support. Not another social worker to tell us what exists outside of the hospital. We are there because we are in crisis. Real crisis. The decision to enter the hospital for help is not the first one we go to..

Because of what we go through with our children who have prolonged illnesses, we have to already fight stigma, financial issues, lack of support and understanding from those we love. Don't make us as parents suffer any more than we have too. Support us in our fight to save our children.

For all of these reasons, I urge you to do everything in your power to move these bills and other prospective solutions forward so that we may all have an improved mental health care system that meets our children's and our families' needs for all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Kimberly D. Adams  
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