



April 3, 2015

To: Senate Human Services Committee

Re: HB2546

Dear Honorable Chair Gesler and Committee Members:

I am writing to ask that you oppose or substantially amend SB 831 and SB 832, a pair of bills that will disrupt CCO innovation and put Oregon's mental health service delivery system at risk.

Options Counseling and Family Services operates mental health and family preservation services in eleven Oregon counties. We serve both adults and children, with an emphasis on services provided in homes and community settings. Options providers see over 4,000 individuals and families each year, providing critical supports to keep people out of hospitals, residential settings and foster care.

SB 831 requires coordinate care organizations (CCOs) to contract or work with licensed health care providers for mental health services. The bill creates a false equivalence between licensing status and the integrated delivery of health care. Oregon's mental health services are delivered by a dedicated workforce with a wide range of training and expertise. Oregon already utilizes a workforce of master's level behavioral health clinicians who are qualified under strict rules for competency. This bill will hinder the ability of nonprofit agencies to fully utilize this existing workforce by limiting contracting to a group of professionals who are not necessarily the best suited to provide the services Oregonians need.

SB 832 extends and adds to the problems created by SB 831, by requiring CCOs to contract with an unregulated group of private practitioners. Additionally, the bill directs the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to write an unnecessary new layer of rules that may well result in physicians opting out of serving Oregon Health Plan members.

This pair of bills attempt to direct CCOs to structure their contracting and service delivery in manner that will only serve to complicate the successful operation of nonprofit agencies such as Options in the delivery of community-based services. The private practitioners that these bills require the CCOs to utilize have not demonstrated an interest in providing the services in homes and communities that are so crucial to the individuals we serve.

I am respectfully requesting that you do not move SB 831 and SB 832 forward in their present form.

Sincerely,

Stephen Allan, Ph.D.  
CEO

cc: Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs

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