



April 26, 2015

Senate Committee On Human Services and Early Childhood
Oregon Legislative Assembly
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 2234

Dear Chair Gelser and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services and Early Childhood:

I am writing to ask for your support of HB 2234. As the Statewide Manager for the Oregon Network of Child Abuse Intervention Centers (ONCAIC), I work with centers throughout the state who provide services to over 6200 Oregon children each year. There are 21 Child Abuse Intervention Centers (CAICs) throughout Oregon and while they vary in size and in the services they provide, the core services provided when there are concerns of abuse include: forensic interviews, medical evaluations, mental health treatment or referrals, and coordination of victims services. CAICs also work in partnership with child protective services, law enforcement and other medical and mental health providers based on the need of each individual child.

ONCAIC provides technical support and training to CAICs and professionals throughout the state to ensure quality services for children when there are concerns of abuse. As I travel and work with these dedicated teams of professionals, I'm struck by the financial challenges that impact our ability to serve these most vulnerable victims. The CAICs across the state rely on a variety of funding sources to serve the the children in their communités, including private funding raised through community fundraising efforts, and grants. Centers are also grateful for the funds they currently receive from the Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Intervention Account (CAMI) (described in ORS 418.746 and ORS 418.783). Unfortunately, these funds are not adequate to address the costs of services. Centers must be able to bill health benefit providers for the specialized medical assessments, including the critical forensic interview portion of the assessment and family support services which are both currently not billable services.

While Oregon has succeeded in providing health insurance to low income residents, the increase in patients insured through Medicaid has created additional challenges for centers. 75% of the children seen across the state are medicaid-covered patients. And while a portion of the medical services provided currently are billable, they only receive reimbursements for an

average of 24% of the amount submitted, meaning centers have to rely on their local communities to help make up the deficit through fundraising. All Oregon CAICs serve children regardless of their ability to pay. This is especially difficult for small and rural centers with limited staff and resources.

HB 2234, provides centers a statewide solution to a growing problem! Ensuring that CAICs are able to bill health benefit providers in a way that reflects proportionately the scope and complexity of the services provided is a critical step in investing in the sustainability of these programs. While community fundraising efforts will continue to fill gaps and help grow programs, ensuring that core services are appropriately reimbursed will help us better ensure access to these services for all of Oregon's children. We encourage you to support this bill requiring the Oregon Health Authority and other health benefit providers to fund specific billing codes or create alternative mechanisms to enable CAICs to reimburse for critical child abuse assessment services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patty Terzian". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Patty Terzian
ONCAIC Statewide Manager