



**Senate Committee on Human Services and Early Childhood
HB 2234
April 28, 2015**

Submitted by Kevin Dowling, Program Manager, CARES Northwest

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

I urge you to support HB 2234 and services dedicated to child abuse victims across Oregon.

My name is Kevin Dowling and I work as the Manager at CARES Northwest in Portland, Oregon. I am also the current Board Chair of the Oregon Network of Child Abuse Intervention Centers.

CARES Northwest is one of the oldest and largest child abuse intervention centers in the country. Last year we provided medical care to more than 1,500 suspected child abuse victims in our outpatient clinic (not including children served in the emergency department, or those admitted to the hospital).

Child abuse is pervasive. In Oregon, over the past 10 years, an average of 63,000 child abuse reports were made to DHS annually, with about 11,000 victims each year. Child abuse is not something that happens to “other children in other kinds of families”. Child abuse cuts across all social, economic, and cultural boundaries. Each one of us knows an adult who has survived abuse, and each one of us knows a child at risk. It is impossible not to.

Stopping child abuse is essential to the health of our community. The *Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Study* (www.acestudy.org), by Kaiser Permanente and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, highlights how trauma in childhood is common, and associated with some of the leading causes of illness and early death in society (www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/findings.html). Further, *An Assessment of the Economic Cost of Child Maltreatment* released by the Perryman Group in November 2014 estimated the lifetime impact of all social costs and lost earnings associated with one year of child maltreatment to be \$57 billion dollars in Oregon alone (www.perrymangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/Perryman_Child_Maltreatment_Report.pdf).

CARES Northwest and Oregon’s twenty other Child Abuse Intervention Centers are committed to serving all children suspected of being abused, regardless of their ability to pay. Unfortunately, for most children, the current insurance system reimburses centers for only about one-quarter the cost of services, and for some services, provides no reimbursement at all.

We believe every child alleged to have been abused deserves access to a coordinated, caring response by experts. HB 2234 would help us achieve that goal by ensuring the reimbursement for services at centers like CARES Northwest is proportionate to the scope and intensity of services provided.

I urge you to support HB 2234 -- because child abuse impacts all of us, and all of us have a role to play in stopping it.

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