

AOCMHP



Association of Oregon Community
Mental Health Programs
local solutions local accountability

April 30, 2015

TO: Chair Prozanski and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

RE: Support for HB 2420A

The Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP) supports HB 2420A which gives community mental health program directors or their designees the direction to consult with criminal defendants found unfit to proceed to assess whether or not appropriate treatment for restoration is available in the community. We agree that most “aid and assist” defendants as well as other people with mental health and substance use disorders should be intercepted in the community, and ideally, before they are involved in the criminal justice system.

Results from communities that have worked on reducing the number of Aid and Assist, or .370, clients who are sent to the Oregon State Hospital suggest that a combination of increased communication and collaboration among Criminal Justice, Mental Health, Public Safety, Hospital and other system partners, along with innovative crisis services such as mobile crisis teams, crisis stabilization centers, crisis intervention training for law enforcement, respite housing, and peer support, decrease the number of .370 clients sent to OSH for restoration. The opportunity provided in this bill for consultation with the community mental health programs before sending an individual to OSH will certainly enhance communication and collaboration among local systems.

Additionally, we recommend allocating funding for community restoration beyond the four counties with the largest numbers of .370 clients at OSH. While these counties represent 57% of the Aid and Assist admissions to the state hospital, Oregon cannot solve its challenges with the .370 population by only funding four counties to provide community restoration services and supports. We need a comprehensive, systemwide approach that adequately funds community-based services and housing across Oregon.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2420A.

Sincerely,

Cherryl L. Ramirez
Director, AOCMHP