



SB 135-A Engrossed

SUPPORT amended payment system for children's education services in Psychiatric day treatment and residential treatment programs.

8 May 2015

House Education Committee

Dear Chair Doherty and Committee Members,

I am Janet Arenz, Executive Director of the Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs. We are a statewide non-profit, supporting good budgets and good policies for children and families, so that we can make children Oregon's greatest asset.

We do this by representing \$205 million in small businesses, delivering services and programs for over 100,000 children. We have a payroll of \$152 million for 5,500 employees and raise \$35 million in philanthropic resources each year.

We represent 57% of the Long-Term Care & Treatment (LTCT) programs in Oregon, and over half of our members provide a behavioral health care service.

WHAT THE BILL DOES

This is a bill that doesn't solve everything we need to do to fund education services for children with behavioral health challenges -- but it takes an important step.

- It uses the Department of Education's Grants in Aid as a funding mechanism.
- It makes a couple clarifications in the bill that all agree on.

WHAT LONG-TERM CARE AND TREATMENT DOES

- Provides education services in special classrooms where behavioral health providers and staff provide treatment to children during school.

WHO RECEIVES THESE SERVICES

- 1150 children who are disabled with behavioral and mental health issues because of abuse and neglect
- 43% of them are children of color
- 94% of them are in poverty so significant they need free and reduced lunches
- 99% of them are in treatment services provided by Medicaid because of poverty and trauma

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BACKGROUND

The funding formula and methodology for LTCT was set in statute more than 37 years ago, and lags desperately far behind in funding the needs of the children and the providers.

A study was conducted by the Department of Education in 2008 [American Institutes for Research], focusing on the funding for LTCT programs. The study summary indicated:

- It is not a rational funding formula.
- The ODE's funding "weight" for these children is arbitrary.
- Day and residential treatment programs should be funded the same.

SB 135-A Engrossed makes changes to correct these criticisms.

LTCT programs have evolved significantly over the last 37 years:

- They are rich with evidence-based programs and practices
- Children are in less restrictive environments - 78% of children were able to be supported in regular classrooms
- Providers are delivering more effective services with more significant outcomes.
- Higher rates of children are returning home, and are able to live and function (with these services) at levels which make their ability to succeed in school much greater.

Please move SB 135-A Eng.

Thank you,

Janet D Arenz, Executive Director
Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs

