



May 11, 2015

TO: Chair Greenlick and Members of the House Health Care Committee

RE: Support for SB 561A

On behalf of the Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP), I would like to express our support for SB 561A, directing the Oregon Health Authority to develop a communication plan with local mental health authorities, education and other systems to improve reporting of suspected suicide deaths among youth and young adults. Community mental health programs are delegated by local mental health authorities to oversee and deliver mental health and addictions treatment programs, including suicide prevention and early intervention.

We are working closely with the Divisions of Addictions and Mental Health and Public Health to prevent suicides through population based awareness activities, Mental Health First Aid, and several evidence based training programs for behavioral health and primary care clinicians, and other health care workers. We are also focused on early intervention programs for youth who have mental health problems and have contemplated or attempted suicide.

Through these collaborative efforts, we are hopeful that we can prevent suicides among our youth, but when suspected suicides occur, we agree with a quicker approach to reporting and timely response with post-intervention efforts. It is critical for the community to understand the probable circumstances, not only to begin the healing process, but to prevent suicide clusters from occurring.

Suicide prevention is a top priority for the local mental health service delivery system and we believe that strong communication and collaboration among the system partners will improve our efforts. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 561A.

Sincerely,

Cherryl L. Ramirez

Cherryl L. Ramirez
Director, AOCMHP