

FROM THE DESK OF
Gene Whisnant



Oregon Network of
Child Abuse
Intervention
Centers

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Rep. Gene Whisnant

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HB 2234 (-4): A Solution to Address Costs of Child Maltreatment

HB 2234 requires that the Oregon Health Authority and health benefit plans cover the medical child abuse assessment services provided by a community assessment center, including forensic interviews and mental health treatment. It passed unanimously as amended out of the Health Committee.

The current Oregon Child Abuse Assessment system was developed as a result of "Karly's Law" passed in 2009, (ORS 418.792). Yet, funding has been inadequate to ensure that abused children are able to be evaluated and treated in this evidence based system. As a result, hundreds of cases each year have to go through Emergency Rooms or other avenues instead of Child Abuse Intervention Centers with their trained child abuse professionals. HB2234 will simply ensure that community-based CAIC's are available throughout the State of Oregon.

Background: Child Abuse in Oregon

Child maltreatment is pervasive and impacts children of all ages, gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status. In Oregon, 10,630 victims of child abuse were confirmed, and more than 64,000 reports of abuse were made in 2013.¹ Evidence suggests that more than 13% of children are subject to abuse or neglect each year². Child victims who don't receive early intervention are at higher risk for chronic health problems and high-risk behaviors resulting in higher long-term health care and social service expenses.³ The estimated lifetime impact of social costs and lost earnings associated with non-fatal maltreatment incidence in Oregon in 2014 is \$58 billion dollars.⁴ **In Oregon, more than 6,200 children receive these necessary services from CAICs each year, but hundreds, if not thousands more are turned away because of a lack of funding and capacity.**

The problem

CAICs currently request reimbursement from insurance providers for medical services. However the specialized forensic interviews and medical assessments are not funded. An increase in patients insured by Medicaid has created additional challenges for CAICs including:

- An increase in Medicaid-covered patients from 63% in 2009-10 to 75% last year.
- Medicaid reimbursements cover only 24% of the cost (76% write off rate)
- Private reimbursements cover only 54% of the cost (46% write-off rate).
- The inability to bill insurance or Medicaid for any reimbursement for forensic interviews, which are key to the success of the program.

The Solution:

HB 2234 requires the Oregon Health Authority and health benefit plans to proportionately cover critical child abuse assessment services provided by child assessment centers using billing or other payment mechanisms. It passed unanimously out of the House Health Committee.

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¹ Oregon Department of Human Services: Children, Family and Adults Divisions: 2013 Child Welfare Data Book

² The Perryman Group (2014) *Suffer the Little Children: An assessment of the Economic Cost of Child Maltreatment*

³ Felitti, V. J., & Anda, R. F. (1997.) *The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

⁴ The Perryman Group (2014) *Suffer the Little Children: An assessment of the Economic Cost of Child Maltreatment*



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