

To: Chair Jeff Barker and members, House Committee on Judiciary

From: Liesl Wendt, Director - Multnomah County Department of County Human Services

Date: Tuesday, February 9, 2016

RE: Support for House Bill 4013 with -1 amendments

Multnomah County asks that you pass HB 4013 and include the -1 amendments.

In 2014, there were over 38,000 reports of abuse and neglect of elders and vulnerable adults in Oregon; this is a 10% increase over the previous year. This increase is predicted to continue as Oregonians live longer.

With over 620,000 older adults and people with disabilities who are potentially vulnerable to abuse in Oregon, it's vital that we continue to find ways to improve our systems to protect those individuals from abuse.

Research indicates that abuse of elders and vulnerable adults can hasten death. Fatality Review Teams in both the child abuse and domestic violence settings have improved early intervention and collaboration between systems. A Fatality Review Team bring together a group of professionals to examine deaths that result from or relate to a certain cause, in order to improve the gap or system that caused, contributed to or failed to prevent the death and , thus, prevent similar deaths in the future.

Examples of improvements that have happened in other communities include:

- Increased public education regarding risk factors for older adult abuse and suicide;
- Identification and resolution of service system gaps that have contributed to or failed to prevent violence against older adults and people with disabilities;
- Targeted training for human services, law enforcement and justice staff;
- Increased prosecution of individuals who have abused older adults and people with disabilities; and
- Implementation of legislation to improve services and coordination addressing abuse and violence against older adults and people with disabilities.

Multnomah County has a history of strong coordination among human services, law enforcement and justice partners to address abuse of older adults and people with disabilities. We believe that the addition of an elderly/vulnerable person fatality review system will **significantly** expand our efforts to address and prevent abuse for these vulnerable populations. Our department of county human services looks forward to lending our expertise with the DV Fatality Review teams to this effort in service of better outcomes.

Thank you for your support and passage of HB 4013 with the -1 amendments.
