



Testimony in support of HB 4116 – Jail Inmate Health Care Coverage

February 9, 2016

Dear Chair Barker and Members of House Judiciary Committee,

On behalf of the Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP) I would like to express our enthusiastic support for HB 4116 to pave the way for Oregon to demonstrate cost savings when Medicaid benefits are continued for people who are incarcerated in jails, and ultimately to convince the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to discontinue prohibiting payment of health care services for inmates of a public institution (the inmate exception). We agree with Representative Weidner that even if we capped the period of time to continue Medicaid benefits at 30 days, this would alleviate discontinuation of coverage for a majority of the preadjudicated population, whose average stay is 15 days, and most of whom have mental illness or substance use disorders.

The convening of a task force will allow us to plan our legislative strategy for 2017, in alignment with the 1115 waiver amendment request to allow for significant substance use disorder system change, which incorporates waiving institutions for mental disease (IMD) exclusions when limited duration institutional care is appropriate. We know that many individuals with opiate addictions land in jail instead of residential treatment, and providing Medicaid coverage for these individuals would allow providers to maintain or begin opiate treatment protocols, continuity of care plans and uninterrupted treatment when they are released back in to the community.

AOCMHP is happy to participate on the Task Force on County Jail Inmate Health Care Coverage.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 4116.

Sincerely,

Cherryl L. Ramirez

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Director, AOCMHP