



ALEX CUYLER

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DATE: March 17, 2017
TO: House Committee on Health Care
RE: HB 2980, relating to mental health services

Chair Greenlick and Members of the Committee:

Lane County cannot offer support for HB 2980, a measure which, if implemented could create two or more community mental health programs within a county.

We offer the following observation which influenced this decision:

In 2015, Oregon Health Authority (OHA) for the first time was able to centralize regulatory authority over community mental health programs at a cost of almost \$900,000 and the creation of four FTE through a policy option package for the current biennium. HB 2980 as written would burden the agency with contract administration costs which are not there now. While the measure only applies to a situation if a county has relinquished its authority, having the agency managing multiple contracts for peer organizations has a high potential to lead to disputes. Disputes of this magnitude play out in the courts, and the expense related to legal costs will only take money from scarce resources that would otherwise be invested into service delivery.

We offer a relevant example of how this could occur, and would produce a multitude of poor outcomes. Under Oregon Law, a community mental health director is the only individual who the court may work with within the realm of aid and assist. HB 2980 could create multiple community mental health directors, and one could imagine a situation whereby differing opinions could arise as these directors evaluate resources in the community and report back on consultations so established. In this example, the court is burdened above and beyond its current practices, which are already an expensive procedure under Oregon law.

We believe this dynamic will un-necessarily contribute to the size and cost of health care and the judicial system and particularly in this environment that is not good public policy. We urge no further action on this measure.

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY