

## Oregon Legislative Assembly

Joint Ways and Means  
Subcommittee on Public Safety  
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Testimony on HB 5004

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Co-Chairs Winters and Stark, Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you in support of full funding for Community Corrections programs. I am the CEO of a private non-profit Community Mental Health Program located in Klamath County. As such, I'm not really qualified to speak to you today about the complexities of operating a community corrections program, or about the full impact that currently proposed budget cuts will have on corrections agencies across the state. I can, however, describe how our Community Mental Health Program in Klamath has been able to successfully partner with Klamath County Community Corrections to deliver co-occurring mental health and substance abuse treatment services and the outcomes we have achieved.

It is well known that behavioral health factors such as substance abuse, childhood trauma, and mental illness are significant factors that contribute to criminal activity, and that an inability to overcome these risk factors, in turn, contributes to high levels of criminal recidivism. We also know that individuals with these risk factors, who are also engaging in criminal activity, rarely seek out behavior health services voluntarily, even though meta analyses of research shows that behavioral health interventions designed to meet the psychiatric and criminal justice needs of offenders with mental illness have shown to produce significant reductions in psychiatric and criminal recidivism (Morgan, et al 2012).

Since we started our joint project with Klamath Community Corrections we have provided almost 16,000 co-occurring services to Community Corrections clients, and in calendar year 2016 we provided services to 987 corrections clients. These services are mandated by release agreements and supervision requirements imposed by Community Corrections. We have adopted the philosophy that there should be no escape from treatment. We conduct mental health and substance use assessments, every client has received a standardized risk assessment, we develop person-centered service plans, and we work hard to engage these individuals in active treatment. We have endeavored to create an array of wrap-around type services geared to individualized needs. In addition to typical co-occurring treatment, these might include assistance with housing, employment, family counseling, parenting education, adult education, and other interventions that are known to reduce recidivism.

We have been able to blend funds from a variety of resources to support these services. Corrections funds and grant funding have been directed to this project, and Oregon Health Plan funding through our local coordinated care organization, Cascade Health Alliance, have paid for services to eligible members.

Many of the corrections clients in this program have been offered 90 day transitional release from state institutions, and upon their return to the community they are mandated into services. The resulting decrease in prison bed days has both reduced pressure on state institutions, and has created significant savings. Another outcome of this project is the reduction in probation and post-prison revocations. Our county has seen a reduction of approximately 35% in revocations over the past two years, again reducing prison bed days and the associated costs. We have also seen significant changes in the lives of the corrections clients we've served. We have seen numerous examples of individuals turning their lives around, achieving sobriety, recovering from psychiatric disorders, earning their GED, obtaining stable employment, assuming appropriate parental roles, and moving away from criminogenic behavior toward healthier pro-social life styles

I am concerned that our project will be discontinued if the proposed funding cuts to the corrections budget are implemented. We believe that we have demonstrated positive outcomes and cost savings, and I ask you to consider this as you struggle to address our state budget challenges.

## References

Treating offenders with mental illness: A research synthesis. Morgan, Robert D.; Flora, David B.; Kroner, Daryl G.; Mills, Jeremy F.; Varghese, Femina; Steffan, Jarrod S. Law and Human Behavior, Vol 36(1), Feb 2012, 37-50. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0093964>