



ALEX CUYLER

Intergovernmental Relations Manager
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DATE: March 24, 2017
TO: House Committee on Health Care
RE: HB 2408, relating to access to health services in schools

Dear Chair Greenlick and Members of the Committee:

HB 2408 has three sections with three distinct appropriations designed to provide additional (and sometimes brand new) services within Oregon's schools. Lane County has direct experience with the provision of health services which are ensconced within a local high school, and understands both the benefit of these services and the need for additional services. Lane County supports HB 2408 and urges the Committee to schedule a work session for this bill and move it into the realm of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means.

Section One of the bill would provide \$995,000 for the establishment and operations of new health care clinics in schools. There are a myriad of health outcome reasons why siting and operating a clinic within a school makes sense. Beyond the obvious, exposing school aged children to professionals within the health care field can only yield positive results as Oregon continues to find pathways for students to careers, particularly within the health care field.

Section Two of the bill would provide \$3M for the provision of mental health services within schools. This provision is key and absolutely necessary. School aged children struggle with mental health issues regularly and are not well prepared for how to respond to internal and external factors that impact their mental health. Too often, they turn to drugs and alcohol to numb these feelings.

Section Three of the bill provides an unspecified amount of money to schools to develop trauma informed care, a suite of principles rather than a prescribed set of practices or procedures. These principles depend on student and family engagement, empowerment, and collaboration. This methodology strives to change the paradigm, all too present in schools, from "what is wrong with you?" to "what happened to you?" This kind of supportive care is far more effective than seclusion or restraining.

The funding within this measure is designed to avoid future costs for more expensive public service delivery within the realm of public safety, the courts, workforce development, and homelessness assistance. Lane County supports upstream investments such as those described in HB 2408.

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY