

April 12, 2017

Representative Mitch Greenlick, Chair  
House Committee on Health Care  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Representative Greenlick, and the Members of the House Committee on Health Care,

As a member of the Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing community, I ask you to support HB 3415 with amendments. The State of Oregon lacks critical access to direct mental health services for people who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, or Hard of Hearing.

Hearing loss need no longer be a significant barrier to communication, thanks to today's technology. Before video relay services, real-time captioning, and video remote interpreting, and other innovations, losing your hearing excluded you from normal participation in educational, public and social affairs. The emotional and psychological impacts of that exclusion can be profound for persons of every age, and can be costly.

Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing people are still being excluded, despite availability of communication technology. Businesses, government programs, and social services are under informed about the available communication technologies and are under informed about legal provisions to accommodate people who need them. A tiny number of Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing people can advocate for their own communication rights, and do so tirelessly every time they encounter a new business or a new organization or program. The clear majority doesn't know their rights, and are unable to access consultation and mental health services to mitigate the resulting emotional and psychological impacts of exclusion, or prevent them altogether. There is no designated place or program they can turn to for the support, guidance and counseling they need to regain stability. Oregon Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing services would provide these much-needed resources.

I ask you and your committee to bring HB 3415 to the floor in the Senate and House with a **DO PASS** recommendation. Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,



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