



Testimony in support of HBs 2175 and 2176 – Removing limitation on number of sobering facilities and authorizing use of funds from Mental Health, Alcoholism and Drug Services Account

April 11, 2017

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 support for HBs 2175 and 2176, removing the limitation on the number of sobering facilities across the state and authorizing up to 10% of a county's Mental Health, Alcoholism and Drug Services Account and up to 10% of the Oregon Health Authority's matching funds to fund sobering facility operations.

The existing sobering centers provide a much needed option for law enforcement and crisis service providers, who without these facilities would have to take people who are intoxicated to jails or hospitals. It makes sense to allow any county to pursue this option if we view a sobering center as a transition from a 24-hour safe facility to become sober, which is not a substitute for treatment, to longer term care for people with chronic substance use disorders.

While we support more sobering centers across the state, expansion must not come at the cost of reducing and reallocating the very limited statewide treatment services bucket. There is certainly a close intersection between sobering and substance use disorder treatment, it is also a public safety function and would align well with the objectives of Justice Reinvestment. As sobering centers expand, there will be increased demand for treatment services. We will need to work with our public safety partners to find creative solutions to braiding the funding needed to build and operate sobering centers beyond the State and County funds delineated in HB 2176.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HBs 2175 and 2176.

Sincerely,

Cherryl L. Ramirez

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Director, AOCMHP