

# JASPER MOUNTAIN

Hope for Children & Families

Jasper Mountain ♦ 37875 Jasper-Lowell Road, Jasper, OR 97438 ♦ (541) 747.1235 - Fax (541) 747.4722  
SAFE Center ♦ 89124 Marcola Road, Springfield, OR 97478 ♦ (541) 741.7402 Fax (541) 726.9869

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Dave Ziegler, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

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Judy Littlebury  
Co-Founder/Consultant

As the founder and Executive Director of Jasper Mountain I appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony regarding the Oregon System of Care for children. In my short time today I cannot go into all the problem areas in our Oregon System, but I will focus on this primary message—private non-profit programs for children in Oregon are the State's solution to serious long-term impacts of child abuse. Our State system needs to be supporting and assisting these programs and their important work rather than acting like they are the problem.

You will receive testimony concerning the dwindling resources for children in our State, you will also hear about the lack of sufficient investment by the State in services for young people leading to critical capacity problems. I will address what I consider to be serious problems trying to do our work within the regulatory environment of the State system.

Jasper Mountain serves the most damaged very young preteen children. We focus on young children because we find better outcomes before they become teens. Jasper Mountain is internationally recognized as one of the top treatment centers for traumatized children in the world. We have professionals from all over the world come to our campus to learn how we reflect some of the best treatment success of any program. What we have learned about successful treatment of child abuse and trauma has become the nine books I have authored. A week from today I leave on an international training tour to share how children can rebound from serious child abuse and have very successful lives.

Our perspective is somewhat unique in that we do not have group contracts with the State of Oregon. We gave back all our contracts 12 years ago when it became clear that Oregon was moving to managed care, local control, and eventually for-profit corporations restricting care rather than providing the most damaged children in our State the intensive psychological treatment they needed and deserve. Jasper Mountain works with states throughout the Country and continues to serve the most needy children. Although we do not have group contracts with Oregon, we are still under the regulatory system of DHS, a system that has steadily grown more oppressive and inefficient with the last six months being the most problematic.

Keeping in mind that Jasper Mountain is one of the top treatment centers in the US and the world, here are a few facts about Oregon regulations:

- Over the last six months we have not had a single day without an open investigation of child abuse.
- During that same time period 14 issues have resulted in regulatory action by DHS.





- Four investigations have been completed in the last six months. None have been completed with the required time frame of the Administrative Rules. The four averaged three times the length of time allowed in the Rules.
- Six issues have been closed at screening, four investigations have been completed.
- Today we have four current investigations.

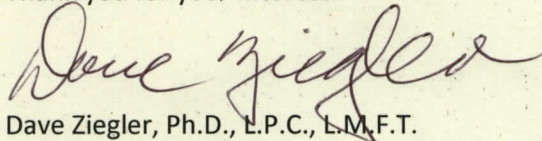
Someone might say 'where there is smoke there must be fire,' but not in this case. Here are some of the "concerns." Two young girls kissed to see what it felt like, a caseworker noticed "ill fitting" shoes on a child, a bus driver noticed a child's eye was red and the child went to a pediatrician and had impetigo but the investigation went on for six months. Of the hundreds of hours of my time, my staff's time and Oregon investigators time there have been no substantiated cases. I have little question the current open cases will result in the same outcome.

DHS has recently indicated the regulatory problems have been solved and are behind us. That is not our experience. DHS data indicated that in the most recent 90 days period 97% of the reports were closed at screening. Clearly this shows cases are being reported that are not needing investigations. There is still confusion and inefficiency. One branch of DHS closes a case but another branch opens an investigation on the same case. DHS notifies us there is an issue but they tell us the required notification does not have to include what the issue is. Some cases have been closed only to be reopened. My staff who are investigated do not know when an issue is fully closed by all branches of investigation. I hope DHS has made improvements but there is more to be done.

Our State Association will address specific bills as well as legislative solutions to the current regulatory problem areas.

All the time and focus to deal with these examples in our organization alone have taken time away from treating the real problems of child abuse with our children. I have had good staff leave their jobs due to concerns of losing their careers because of a chance of being investigated. I fail to see how looking for child abuse in the wrong places and taking the focus off treatment for our damaged children is enhancing the safety of children in substitute care in Oregon. I will repeat, the private non-profit programs that serve children are Oregon's answer to child abuse. Please support these programs rather than make their difficult jobs even more difficult.

Thank you for your interest.



Dave Ziegler, Ph.D., L.P.C., L.M.F.T.  
Executive Director