

March 17, 2020

Oregon's Joint Special Committee on Coronavirus Response

Dear Chair Roblan and Holvey, and Members of the Committee:

To ensure the ongoing safety of Oregon's most vulnerable children and youth, in shelter, residential or day treatment settings, the Alliance is asking for an immediate investment in into this system of care. Organizations providing these services are already heading towards a financial catastrophe which, if left unaddressed, could dramatically reduce Oregon's capacity today and for years to come.

We are asking the Joint Special Committee on Coronavirus Response to adopt the following recommendations:

- **Allocate \$5,000,000** to create immediate access to a fund that would allocate up to \$125,000 to each provider to be able to:
 - **Retain/maintain staffing ratios** to ensure safety and compliance with state and federal requirements.
 - **Temporarily pay staff** who may not have the resources to be off without pay, and/or may have already used their Oregon Sick Leave and/or still may need to remain home.
 - **Hire additional staff or incentivize staff** to come to work to ensure safety and consistency with the children and youth.
 - **Fund additional costs** such as transportation due to school closures, food and other supplies for basic needs.
- **Allocate \$275,000** to purchase the necessary personal protective safety equipment (gloves, masks, etc.) and supplies (especially safety, hygiene and infection control products) with priority given to residential and shelter programs which have 24/7 needs.
- **Approve HB4039 from the 2020 short session**, providing critical assistance to keep Runaway Homeless Youth shelters open and operating, with an emergency clause to get the funding on the street immediately.
- **Approve the \$5 million BRS rate investment** approved by the Ways and Means Committee this year, which will serve as an emergency lifeline to allow providers to retain their critical workers during this economic crisis, and keep the doors open to the state's most vulnerable children.
- Language to require DHS, OHA, OYA, OHCS and county and local governments to **work with providers to access space in case there's a need for quarantine** or if a program must close for youth who are unaffiliated with OYA or CW. Direction that state funds can be used to pay for this emergency space for this purpose.
- Language directing CCOs, through their reserves, and both OYA and DHS to **ensure full contract revenue** if a program is required to reduce capacity or temporarily close.
- Direction that OYA, OHA and DHS continue to **provide licensing flexibility** such as limitation of visits, enhanced screening of visitors, room occupancy, treatment hours, etc.

With many of the state's children's non-profits already at a tipping point, these steps are critical if they are to continue to provide the resources and supports necessary to the state's most vulnerable children and youth.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.



Royce Bowlin
Executive Director