



Testimony in support of SB 918

LMHA disclosure of suspected suicides to local system partners

March 5, 2019

Dear Chair Gelser and Members of Senate Committee on Human Services,

My name is Todd Noble, I am the Linn County Health Department Administrator, and as a member of the Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP), I am testifying in support of SB 918.

This bill clarifies the local system partners to whom a local mental health authority is directed to provide notice of death suspected to be a suicide, and the content of the notification. We believe this will improve the consistency of youth suicide reporting processes across the state and the timeliness of these reports. In my experience, the issue our community often faces is when a suspected suicide occurs, we as a Community Mental Health Program cannot disclose any identifiable information to our school partners due to privacy restrictions. This is a challenge because schools need to know the name of the youth so that they can identify friends of the affected youth and the community can reach out and intervene. Clear communication channels need to be in place so that all parties are informed and we can respond to community needs. This will also assist us in ensuring the Oregon Health Authority is notified in a timely fashion.

Additionally, we would recommend a similar requirement for medical examiners to notify Community Mental Health Programs (CMHPs) about suspected youth suicides so that CMHPs are able to report these deaths to local system partners and OHA. This has been a barrier in some counties, both those that have a medical examiners and those who do not. We would be happy to work with you on any necessary language revisions.

Sincerely,

Todd Noble
Linn County Health Department Administrator