



## **AOCMHP Testimony on SB 973**

### **Behavioral Health Justice Reinvestment**

March 25, 2019

Dear Chair Prozanski and Members of Senate Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of the Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP), we support SB 973, which encompasses the recommendations made by the Behavioral Health Justice Reinvestment steering committee to invest in community-based behavioral health services and supports in order to divert people with mental illness and substance use disorders from the justice system.

The program support recommendations align with our funding priorities: supportive housing, crisis services, crisis stabilization centers, care coordination, case management, sobering centers, and workforce training. These services and supports espouse our philosophy to intercept people with behavioral health challenges before they are incarcerated, or ideally, before any law enforcement involvement. The prioritization of acute and crisis services as well as respite and permanent housing developments are also complementary to Aid & Assist community restoration efforts and will impact emergency department use.

Additionally, we very much appreciate the inclusion of data collection on key performance measures in the grants to communities. Program evaluation has been a missing component in most community-based behavioral health funding agreements, which has made it difficult to show cost avoidance and return on investment in the behavioral health system, although we know there are significant cost savings in other systems. We also support the CJC Justice Reinvestment model of county applications for funding and a state/county match using a combination population/utilization formula.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our enthusiastic support for SB 973.

Sincerely,

*Cheryl L. Ramirez*

Cheryl L. Ramirez  
Director, AOCMHP