

Subject: House Bill 5512 OHCS Budget – Permanent Supportive Housing Investment

To: Co-Chair Senator James Manning Jr., Co-Chair Representative David Gomberg and all the members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development

From: Mercedes Elizalde, Public Policy Director, Central City Concern

Date: 3/25/2019

Central City Concern is a non-profit direct service organization that provides integrated primary and behavioral health care, supportive and affordable housing, and employment services to people impacted by homelessness in the Tri-County area. Central City Concern operates about 2,000 units of affordable housing, serves 9,000 patients annually through our 13 Federally Qualified Health Centers, makes 1,200 job placements annually and operates social services for the community justice programs in Multnomah and Clackamas counties. This year we are celebrating 40 years of service to our communities.

Central City Concern writes in support of the OHCS proposed budget. The proposal includes numerous needed investments for development and services across the housing spectrum. We are especially excited to see requests for \$54.5M for supportive housing and more funding for LIFT and affordable housing preservation.

When people are safely and stably housed, communities are healthier and stronger. We are excited to see the state and our local government partners prioritize funding for permanent supportive housing (PSH). We hear from both community and government partners that they want to see a visible difference for people most impacted by homelessness and poverty who are currently living unsheltered.

- **Single adults experiencing unsheltered homelessness are the largest and growing group of people experiencing homelessness**
 - In Oregon, the [2018 HUD report](#) showed there were 14,476 people experiencing homelessness, 7,112 or 49% are unsheltered single adults. When the number of sheltered single adults is including, single adults make up 77% of people experiencing homelessness.
 - To make the biggest impact on homelessness we need greater focus on single adults, especially on people living unsheltered
 - We need to prioritize the needs of single adults and target key areas such as: addressing untreated or undertreated substance use disorder & mental health needs, eliminating barriers for people with past criminal justice involvement and provide employment & economic support
 - We need to invest more in solutions we know work. There is great work being done, but our systems are built for thousands when we need to serve tens of thousands

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- **Supportive Housing must be taken to scale to see a visible difference in homelessness**
 - Only PSH can adequately address chronic homelessness, targeting services for people with the most complex health needs
 - We should be using our Medicaid system and dollars to target and deliver supportive housing
 - Capital investments and on-going service dollars must be executed concurrently if supportive housing is going to be successful
 - On-going service dollars are not currently adequately contemplated at any level of government in Oregon

If local communities want a visible difference in street homelessness and long shelter stays, single adults living unsheltered need to be a priority. Service dollars paired with capital dollars to build supportive housing should target those most in need, especially: people who are experiencing chronic homelessness, serious and persistent mental illness and/or other health complications such as substance use disorder, cognitive impairments from traumatic brain injuries and people with other chronic debilitating health conditions.

The proposed OHCS budget makes significant commitment to capital investments, as well as some rental subsidies, including as part of a partnership with the OHA. The combined \$54.5M OHA and OHCS partnership for housing as healthcare is a powerful proposal we hope all legislators can support. The Statewide Housing Plan looks forward to more supportive housing development with a goal of 1,000 new supportive housing units. In order to move forward with stated goals for permanent supportive housing the legislature has an opportunity to make bold budget investments to make the Housing Plan and more possible.

We urge you to support deep investments in housing development and supportive housing services. You can do this by passing HB 5512 as is or with additional allocations for supportive housing development and on-going service dollars targeted to take supportive housing to scale.

Thank you,

Mercedes Elizalde
Public Policy Director
Central City Concern