



## **SB 1039 A– Authorizes appointment of Health Care Advocate**

May 10, 2019

Dear Chair Salinas and Members of the House Committee on Health Care,

On behalf of the Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP), we are writing in support of SB 1039, which strengthens support for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) in making health care related decisions.

AOCMHP's membership includes 32 Community Developmental Disabilities Programs (CDDPs) across Oregon, which help assure the protection and safety of over 28,000 Oregonians with I/DD in collaboration with families and providers and provide case management services to over 19,000 children and adults eligible for services.

SB 1039 A sets high standards for health care advocates to make health care decisions for people with I/DD who have been denied critical services due to their disability who do not have a guardian or other legal representative to speak on their behalf. CDDPs report people have been denied treatment in medical or dental offices and in hospitals. SB 1039 A appoints health care advocates, who can assist an individual in making health care decisions or make them on their behalf, with the help of their individual service plan (ISP) team. Oregon rules have allowed for health care representatives in the past, which has made a critical, often lifesaving difference in the lives of people with I/DD.

Another important aspect of this bill is that it includes a health care advocate for individuals living in the family home or on their own. Families often do not have resources to become guardians, so the adult is unable to access mental health or other health care due to the individual's inability to make health care decisions. In many situations, an individual only needs assistance in making health-related decisions and does not need a full legal guardianship, which restricts the person's rights more narrowly.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for SB 1039 A, and for the proposed amendment to SB 1039 A.

Sincerely,

Cherryl L. Ramirez  
Director, AOCMHP

Sarah Jane Owens  
DD Specialist, AOCMHP