



# MARION COUNTY PUBLIC SAFETY COORDINATING COUNCIL

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Vice-Chair: Rob Carney

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**Joe Kast, Sheriff**  
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Marion County Circuit Court

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Oregon Youth Authority

**Cari Sessums, Representative**  
Alcohol & Drug Planning Committee

February 4, 2020

Representative Alissa Keny-Guyer, Chair  
Representative Ron Noble, Vice-Chair  
Representative Anna Williams, Vice-Chair  
House Committee on Human Services and Housing  
Oregon Legislative Assembly  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support House Bill 4112

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice-Chairs Noble and Williams:

The Marion County Public Safety Coordinating Council supports HB 4112, and urges you to increase funding to Children's Advocacy Centers (CAC) by \$3M for the remainder of this 2019-21 biennium. Child advocacy centers across Oregon desperately need this funding.

Child abuse is increasing statewide and funding will help hire more staff without whom the incidence of serious physical injury and death of children will continue to rise. Children's Advocacy Centers play a crucial role in diagnosing, stopping and treating child abuse. They employ the specialists who provide medical diagnoses, forensic interviewing, family support, and care coordination pursuant to ORS Chapter 418. The advocacy centers work closely with all the multidisciplinary team partners including child protective services workers.

Today Oregon Department of Human Services child protective services workers who visit homes and assess the safety of children are being placed in the position of making critically important decisions that involve a medical component. As part of a nationwide best practice and pursuant to the mandate of Karly's Law (ORS 419B.022-024), these workers should be using their local Children's Advocacy Centers CAC's for medical evaluation, forensic interviewing, and victim advocacy during the investigation phase. Using local advocacy centers allows the child to be seen by a medical provider with the necessary qualifications to determine whether abuse has occurred. That, in turn, increases the likelihood of sound decision making when it comes to evaluating the safety of the child.

Without sufficient funding, advocacy centers are closed when they should be open, have inadequate appointments available, and lack the staff to triage cases in real time on the phone. Ultimately, children cannot get the help they need, and child protective services workers do not have the tools to successfully evaluate at-risk children.

Approval of funding will correct this problem. By increasing advocacy center hours, medical and forensic interviewing staff will be available and open up more appointments for children who need them. This is also one of the surest ways to complement the work of the child protective service workers.

On behalf of the Marion County Public Safety Coordinating Council, I urge you to increase funding to Oregon's Children Advocacy Centers by \$3M for the remainder of this 2019-21 biennium

Sincerely,

  
Commissioner Kevin Cameron, Chair  
Marion County Public Safety Coordinating Council

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February 5, 2020

Cc: Senator Betsy Johnson  
Senator Steiner Hayward  
Representative Dan Rayfield