



ASSOCIATION OF OREGON COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

For more information contact **Cherryl Ramirez** at **503-399-7201**

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Dear Chair Holvey and Members of the House Committee on Rules,

On behalf of the Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP), we would like to express our support for SB 1575A, which represents the agreed upon revisions in the original bill, introduced to improve SB 24 changes from last session. The increased consultation and coordination between the Oregon State Hospital (OSH), judicial, community mental health and other local system partners has led to more people under Aid and Assist served in their communities. We agree with the objective of diverting people from jail and from the Oregon State Hospital whenever appropriate services, supports and housing are available in the community.

SB 1575A includes revisions that are essential for CMHPs to be successful in restoring Aid & Assist clients in the community by limiting community restoration to legal and treatment services, and excluding supervision from these responsibilities, thereby ensuring CMHPs “stay in our lane” rather than veer into public safety and judicial system roles.

Also essential for successful restoration in the community is adequate funding for a wide array of legal and behavioral health services, various levels of housing, like secure residential treatment facilities, residential treatment facilities, and residential treatment homes, crisis stabilization centers, and, of course, support for the behavioral health workforce that provides these services. In order for the community behavioral health system to significantly decrease the numbers of Aid & Assist clients at OSH and increase the numbers of Aid & Assist clients in the community, there must be an equitable distribution of funding for the community to make it happen.

While we know there is more work to be done, we appreciate the progress we have made on this difficult issue as a system. Please support SB 1575A to ensure we take this system change to the next phase.

Sincerely,

Cherryl L. Ramirez

Cherryl L. Ramirez
Director, AOCMHP