

Monday, April 5, 2021

**Members of the House Health Care Committee
Oregon State Capitol Building
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301**

RE: Written comments of support for HB 3353

Chair Prusak, Vice Chair Salinas, Vice Chair Hayden and House Health Care Committee members,

There are very few places in America that were as negatively impacted by 2020 as Jackson County. On top of the stress most Americans experienced with COVID 19 pandemic, significant racial health disparities and large economic stress, two major wildfires burned down over 2500 homes and threatened tens of thousands more in our county.

A pandemic; plus wildfire; plus economic hardships; plus thousands of families experiencing sudden homelessness have resulted in our social safety net and medical systems being stretched to the breaking point. It would have been so much worse if we as a community hadn't built support structures and new programs. Our Community Advisory Council was one of those players that helped build community that could weather these multiple crisis.

Luckily our community pulled together and we have been able to be resilient to get through the immediate aftermath of these crises. But the long term economic, social and mental health impacts to our communities will result in more intense and complex needs for years to come. We are going to need to start building more robust systems of care to handle the very difficult years to come as our community copes with the long term effects we have experienced.

The COVID pandemic also fully exposed significant health inequities for our immigrant and non-English speaking parts of our community. We have to do a better job of both communicating and creating true equity throughout Jackson County.

The aftermath of crisis means we can't just keep doing things as normal. That's why we as a council support HB 3353. It would allow us, as AllCare's Jackson County Community Advisory Council, to start making multi-year investments in infrastructure, address long term racial and cultural disparities and give us flexibility to recruit the needed providers to allow this community to heal.

Here are examples of projects we weren't able to fully support because of the old CCO funding structure that would be invaluable to help our community rebuild and thrive in the years to come.

Community Works Housing & Supportive Services: Funds provided essential food, assistance in rental costs, utilities, and basic needs expenses for homeless youth and their children who are receiving housing and supportive services.

Listo Health and Wellness Project: Health and Wellness Project brought health and wellness services to low-income, immigrant, Latino children, youth and parents.

Options for Helping Residents of Ashland: Hotel stay and case management/navigation for people displaced from shelters and designated high-risk

Parker House Project: Temporary housing, community resources and education with hands-on support to introduce members back into society with more self-confidence and hope towards a brighter future

Reclaiming Lives Recovery Café: Reclaiming Lives exists to serve those struggling with drug and alcohol addiction in Jackson County. Emphasis is on long-term recovery support for individuals with substance abuse disorder who are committed to life change and recovery.

Please support HB 3353 and give Jackson County the ability to invest in a community to that will be even stronger than it was before.

Sincerely,

The members of the AllCare Health Jackson County Community Advisory Council

Chair: Nicole Witham, Teacher in the Upper Rogue School System and Fire Evacuee

Vice Chair: Marchelle Thomas, founder of Rogue Gender Variance Alliance and Rogue Valley & Southern Oregon Transgender Group and Fire Evacuee

Member: Sarah Spansail, Community Advisory Council Jackson County

Member: Don Bruland, Seniors and Housing Advocate