

Email to the Legislature Dec 11th 2019

Dear All,

Please accept my apology for this late night email and mass distribution.

In 2019 I introduced HB2115 with the help of Reps Daniel Bonham & John Lively. This legislation would have required Oregon DHS to track every foster child on 1-3, 3-5, 8+ medications to include the prescribing Dr. I had a dozen aged out foster youth lined up to testify on how many drugs they were required to take.

As you probably know Oregon DHS does not track at all every child in their care on one or more psychiatric drugs. It took a Federal IG report in 2018 to get raw numbers with Oregon's prescription rates, which turned out to be 1 in 5 kids (19.3%). I couldn't get this data from any agency in Oregon.

Oregon's top prescription payout from Medicaid is for psychotropic drugs.

This federal class action just won in Missouri lays out clear changes before a foster child is prescribed any psychiatric medications to include a separate review & full tracking.

https://www.ozarksfirst.com/local-news/national-news/foster-children-could-have-a-change-in-how-they-get-prescribed-medication/amp/?utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter_kolr10kozl&__twitter_impression=true

Per almost every study done, it's confirmed that children with trauma do not improve on psychiatric drugs, it actually destroys their growing brain.

In Yamhill County, I met with the District Manager, who signs off on all prescriptions and she had no clue one of her foster kids was on 8 different psychiatric medications. Each new med attempting to fix a side effect of the first med.

In Multnomah County many kids were found on 5 or more. Once again those managers "did not know".

Two months ago a father sent me this photo (see attached) of his young girl who was at White Shield on 8 different psychiatric drugs and 4 other heavy tranquilizers or drugs to offset the side effects of those. Douglas County DHS caseworker signed off on a new psych "addiction" drug because the foster child (listed side effect of her medication) was "addicted to self harm". This drug is NOT approved for that at all.

This girl's Psychiatrist (contracted by DHS) who signed off on all these meds has never met this child, and was not the therapist who was successfully helping her before she was removed into care. The Psych had skipped months of follow up, did not check in on the child's well being during the time she was placed in several mental health facilities across Oregon. More recent she was restrained, bruised, forced shots of psych drugs, put in complete isolation, had slurred speech and kept begging to go home.

I think Oregon DHS should be a leader on this and make this a priority in the short session and I believe they want to do so; to include a full audit of all children in care to make sure they are happy, healthy and thriving and most importantly accounted for.

Best regards,

Brittany Ruiz
Parental Rights' Advocate