

March 15, 2023

Re: Support for HB 5511

Dear Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chairs Nguyen and Scharf, and Members of the House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services:

Blanchet House urges your support for House Bill 3303. This bill will go a long way towards improving the collection and sharing of essential information among social and human service agencies in Oregon by creating a Community Information Exchange Board that will:

- Identify gaps in, needs for, and barriers to the sharing of data among community-based organizations and social service providers;
- Identify best practices and areas for improvement in the collection and sharing of social services data;
- Identifying ways state programs can better align with community information exchanges; and
- Identifying ways to support community-based organizations and providers with what they need to best utilize community information exchange systems and platforms.

For 71 years, Blanchet House has provided free hot meals and other resources to houseless and food insecure residents in the Old Town district of Portland. We also operate two transitional housing programs, one in Old Town and our Blanchet Farm program in Yamhill County. Our clients have lived experience with homelessness and poverty, as well as mental illness, chronic illness and disability, and substance use and addiction.

One challenge we experience in our services is that we often experience our clients in very siloed ways. We know they likely receive and have received services from our colleague agencies in Portland and elsewhere, but unless the client provides this history, we don't have access to it. I liken this to a situation in which you receive health care treatment from a variety of providers, known of whom have access to a common medical record or history. We know that this lack of information sharing and coordination significantly diminishes the effectiveness of our health care system, to the patient's detriment and at exceptional financial cost.

The same is true for our collective work with our houseless, housing and food insecure, and impoverished communities. This is why Blanchet House pioneered a new program in our community in which four organizations share peer support specialists in service of our clients, many of whom we have in common. In just over a year of implementation, we have already seen positive results for our clients and staff as a result of a greater exchange of information and a collaborative approach to serving our clients.

Imagine how a more comprehensive and robust community information exchange system will help people in need state-wide!



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We urge you to support HB 3303.

Sincerely,

Scott Kerman

Scott Kerman,
Executive Director