



Chair Greenlick and members of the committee,

My name is Eva RippetEAU, I am a political coordinator at AFSCME Council 75. We represent employees in the behavioral health field at the state, in several counties and at non-profits. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2621 and to ask for consideration of including those leaving treatment centers and jail to be required to receive caring connections.

I would like to call attention to the written testimony provided from Stephanie Sireix, an AFSCME Local 173 member in Polk County. Stephanie is a licensed professional counselor and a certified alcohol and drug counselor 3. In her testimony, she highlights why not only the services that would be provided by the passage of HB 2621 should not only include those who are in a hospital but also those leaving jail and treatment centers. Her examples include a young client who lost access to OHP while in jail; a person who successfully completed substance use disorder treatment only to be sent out to live on the street; and a woman who was in crisis but not perceived as a threat to herself or others.

For the people leaving jail, they lose their OHP because the jail is supposed to be covering their health care needs. However, inmates in Polk County must pay \$10 to see a doctor for any reason. They are then released, needing to reapply for OHP, without their needed medication that keeps them well and without transportation or other connections to supports and will likely have to wait months to see a prescriber.

For the people who had been living on the street prior to going into a residential treatment center, if they aren't given access to housing upon completion of their treatment, they very likely have no housing options other than to sleep on the streets or at the houses where they used drugs previously.

For those in crisis who aren't perceived as a threat but are frequent visitors to their local hospital emergency departments we need to ensure they have connection to immediate crisis services and not have appointments too far into the future for them to hang tight and survive.

Giving people access to supports as they transition from the hospital, treatment centers, or jail, we improve the chances that they will be stable, have success and be contributing members of our society. As Stephanie said in her testimony and as I have heard from others in behavioral health all around the state, let's make wrap-around services and supports easier to access so that isn't the hardest part in getting the substance use disorder or mental health treatment you need.

Oregon AFSCME Council 75 asks you to please consider expanding the caring connections to those transitioning from jail and those leaving residential treatment centers as well as to those leaving a hospital and to please pass HB 2621.

I am happy to answer questions and connect you to the members doing this important, life saving work.