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Senator Sara Gelser, Chair, Oregon Senate Human Services Committee.
Senator Dallas Hear, Vice-Chair
Senator Shemia Fagan, Member
Senator Tim Knopp, Member
Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson, Member

RE: House Bill 2215

Senator Gelser, Senator Hear, and other Committee Members,

Please support House Bill 2215.

I am a retired Psychologist and program administrator now providing mental health consultation, training, and support services to organizations and individuals. I worked at Oregon State Hospital for 19 years and have managed programs in four states.

Oregon House Bill 2215 addresses a vital aspect of services which helps make mental health treatment a "healing" process. Many mental health service sites are residential in nature and group-based. The more individualized that services can be designed, the better in terms of outcome. A group living environment is sometimes an indicated service design for specific needs, but many times it is less-than-indicated, but the best we have to offer at the time.

When citizens enter a group-based residential environment, and a hospital setting even more so, their mental and emotional faculties are already compromised, and therefore more vulnerable to interference, distractions, and sensory over-stimulation from noise, light, touch, etc. Individuals with trauma histories even more so. You yourself might recall times after just a long-day's work when back home and you plead with your family members to turn the television, music, or talking down to a loud roar, just to be able to grab a moment of restful relief or maybe read a book. Your own ability to relax and get ready for the next day may itself be compromised by only the routine challenges a home environment can bring.

When citizens have met more serious challenges to their mental and emotional well-being and their strengths are being overwhelmed, they are in acute need of a healing environment. Not just a "service," a "therapy", a "bed." Not only is the physical and staff environment a potential source of healing or obstruction to healing, but so are the person's peers also receiving treatment. Therefore, there is a need for the treatment setting to be safe, quiet, and structured to create a much better-than-usual environment. Without a statute requiring attention to this in mental health environments, it is just a common pattern to see other high-demand needs begin usurping the attention of management and staff, and reducing attention to the environmental qualities. A healing environment results in shorter

stays, reduced feelings of vulnerability, more opportunities to develop new strengths and re-strengthen old ones. A statutory requirement like HB 2215 would help system and provider personnel maintain a focus on the environment as a non-negotiable healing factor. It is just a counter-check to economic and system forces which distract us away from practice standards and therapeutic basics.

Thank you.

Jacek/Jack Hacia, Psy.D.