



## **AOCMHP Testimony in support of SB 24-1**

### **Aid & Assist Defendant Restoration Process Improvements**

March 11, 2019

Dear Chair Prozanski and Members of Senate Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of the Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP), I am writing to express our full support for SB 24-1, which together with funding for community restoration, will positively impact the Aid & Assist defendant census at the Oregon State Hospital (OSH). We appreciate the opportunity to have participated in the workgroup that has met over the last several months to come up with solutions to the upward trend of the Aid and Assist census at OSH, a symptom of the greater community mental health system capacity and resource challenges.

This bill, as amended, improves communication between the Judiciary system and community mental health programs with requirements for consultation and sharing of evaluations. We also agree with requiring community restoration for misdemeanor defendants unless they need hospital level of care.

These improvements, coupled with resources to support community restoration through the OHA policy option package, will decrease the Aid & Assist defendant census at OSH. Resource priorities for communities include crisis stabilization centers, assistant DAs and Qualified Mental Health Professionals dedicated to Aid and Assist defendant cases, respite housing and more permanent supported housing, secure residential treatment facilities, addiction treatment, and more forensic evaluations. Most importantly, this bill will not only make restoration in communities possible, but intensive treatment needed for stability and recovery to allow more people to remain in their communities.

Thank you for considering SB 24-1 to improve the Aid & Assist defendant restoration process.

Sincerely,

Cherryl L. Ramirez  
Director, AOCMHP