



March 11, 2019

Chair Alissa Keny-Guyer
Vice Chair Ron Noble
Members of the House Committee on Housing and Human Services

Re HB 3178:

I am writing to urge your support for HB 3178 as the Executive Director of the Children's Advocacy Center of Lincoln County. We are a nationally accredited child abuse intervention center that serves all of Lincoln County. We are the only entity in the rural, coastal community of Lincoln County that provides these highly specialized services, such as child forensic interviews and forensic medical exams, which require significant investments in personnel, training and equipment.

The CAC model was devised, adapted and implemented all across the country because it works. It dramatically reduces trauma experienced by the children throughout the process and dramatically increases the potential for the best possible outcome. Child abuse intervention centers consistently provide crucial, unbiased information that community partners, such as child protective services workers in DHS, can trust AND need in order to make those difficult decisions regarding child safety. Our community partners are frequently overburdened by these cases and would greatly benefit from increased access to our services thereby improving outcomes, likely more expeditiously, resulting in more manageable caseloads with potentially less burnout and turnover among caseworkers.

Unfortunately, child abuse intervention centers have been consistently underfunded to the point where our mere existence is sometimes at risk, much less our ability to meet the needs of the children and community partners. More than 50% of our already anemic budget in Lincoln County is pieced together every year by non-sustainable sources such as local city and county grants, foundation grants, and fundraising.

We were fortunate to reach an agreement with our local hospital that employed a Physician Assistant who wanted to be the child abuse Designated Medical Professional (DMP) for our county. The hospital has been providing the DMP to our Center part-time to perform the required medical exams. This position is one of the most critical at the Center and in the county. The DMP has the education and specialized training to provide unbiased medical diagnoses in conjunction with historical patient information that offers a complete medical picture to complement the information obtained by community partners.



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The Children's Advocacy Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, Federal Tax I.D. # 93-1097711

This Physician Assistant is moving out of state and there is currently no one on staff at the hospital that is adequately trained or has the desire to perform these duties. It's difficult to overstate absolute need and the value that this position provides to the community. Neither the hospital nor the CAC has a budget to create a position dedicated to this work and are therefore unable to advertise for this position and attract a qualified candidate to perform the statutorily mandated duties of a Designated Medical Professional. Without the ability to fill this position, exams of children suspected of abuse will most often need to be performed at the emergency room by medical personnel without the requisite training or specialized equipment.

A thorough, detailed study was conducted by the Perryman Group in 2014 to analyze the costs of child maltreatment in the United States¹. The Perryman Group is an independent economic and financial analysis firm that has conducted hundreds of impact analyses and numerous investigations in the areas of public policy, health and wellness, and education. The results detailing total estimated lifetime economic costs of child maltreatment were staggering. The total average cost per child victim was determined to be \$1,800,000. That includes >\$235,000 in health care, >\$53,000 in social welfare and criminal justice, and \$30,000 in education costs per child victim.

This study highlights the devastating effects of child abuse without intervention and treatment. It's not difficult to draw a parallel between the millions of child abuse victims every year and many of the societal problems we struggle with (e.g. homelessness, school dropout rates, the opioid crisis, etc...) and the role child abuse intervention centers can play in truly impacting one of the primary core underlying causes behind these issues.

A more thoughtful and concerted approach to funding our Centers is critical. The passage of HB 3178 will certainly have a much needed positive impact on the outcomes of child abuse cases and the ability of Oregon's child abuse intervention centers to attempt to meet the demands for services, but it shouldn't be the end of the discussion. I urge you to support HB 3178. There are so many lives that are poised to be changed by the good work done at our Centers. I'm hopeful that you will lead our state in advancing the efforts to make this impact.

Sincerely,



Paul Schrader
Executive Director

¹Suffer the Little Children: An Assessment of the Economic Costs of Child Maltreatment. The Perryman Group, Nov. 2014: <http://perrymangroup.com/special-reports/child-abuse-study/>



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