



ASSOCIATION OF OREGON COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

For more information contact Cherryl Ramirez at 503-399-7201

AOCMHP Testimony in support of SB 24-3

Aid & Assist Defendant Restoration Process Improvements

March 13, 2019

Dear Chair Williamson and Members of House Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of the Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP), I am writing to express our full support for SB 24-3, 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 decreasing 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 expectations between the Judiciary system and community mental health programs (CMHPs) with required input from CMHPs for defendants charged with misdemeanors or violations and allowed input from CMHPs for defendants charged with felonies. We also agree with sharing recommendations from the consultations and evaluation reports among all parties involved.

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 permanent supported housing, secure residential treatment facilities, addiction treatment, and more forensic evaluations conducted in communities. Most importantly, this bill will move more restoration responsibilities to communities and the additional resources will support intensive treatment needed for stability and recovery to allow more people to remain in their communities.

Thank you for considering SB 24-3 to improve the Aid & Assist defendant restoration process.

Sincerely,

Cherryl L. Ramirez

Cherryl L. Ramirez
Director, AOCMHP