



Date: 2/5/2020

RE: In Support of Senate Bill 1553

Central City Concern (CCC) is a non-profit direct service organization that provides integrated primary and behavioral health care, supportive and affordable housing, and employment services to people impacted by homelessness in the Tri-County area. CCC operates about 2,200 units of affordable housing, serves 9,000 patients annually through our 13 Federally Qualified Health Centers, supports 1,200 job seekers annually and operates diversion and re-entry programs for the community justice programs in Multnomah and Clackamas counties.

CCC's integrated health care model seeks to bridge the divides between mental health, substance use disorder treatment and physical health. Unfortunately, when we provide these integrated care approaches it is in spite of the regulatory and financial systems in place, rather than because of them. Our system has bifurcated mental health and substance use disorder so much that it actually can incentivize providers to turn clients away until they have "managed" their other condition. Our payment models are often constructed in a way that they best way to get paid for all the service we provide is to tell a patient to leave and make a new appointment for a different day, rather than providing the care all at once when they are ready and able to receive care. These models are antithetical to our goals and we have found workarounds in some places, but not all.

However, we believe that providers should be incentivized to support patients, across different behavioral health needs. We understand that some providers are specialized in their services, but for providers like us who are capable and want to provide integrated services under one roof it should be simple and encouraged. Currently, programs must have staff and facilities must be dual licensed and dual credentialed, however can still only get reimbursed for one service (even if they are providing multiple).

We support and hope you will support SB 1553 to identify way our system can encourage rather than standing in the way of integration, and make services financially sustainable so that more providers will be able to meet the needs of people with co-occurring disorders.