To: Members of the House Committee On Behavioral Health
Re: Support of HB 2417

My name is Rich Rohde. I live in Ashland at 124 Ohio Street. I am a member of Southern Oregon NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness and Unite Oregon.. I want to ask you to support HB 2417 to provide matching fund grants to cities and counties to operate mobile crisis programs like CAHOOTS in Eugene.
I urge you to vote YES on HB 2417, a bill that will provide $10 million in state matching grants to support the development of mobile crisis intervention programs, based on the CAHOOTS model pioneered in Eugene. Mobile crisis intervention teams, as defined in the bill, provide trauma-informed de-escalation and harm reduction techniques to more appropriately respond to the related crises of untreated mental illness, substance abuse and homelessness that impact all of us here in the Rogue Valley.

Experience has shown that law enforcement does not always provide the most appropriate first response for every situation or individual in crisis. This bill would fund --and thus incentivize-- our cities and counties to implement a proven-effective and less costly alternative.

As a past volunteer with our local laundry/shower trailer I saw for many years how police response to many unhoused folks would trigger difficult responses from folks with mental health issues. Those police encounters would unnecessarily escalate when a trauma informed response could deescalate. As a member of NAMI-Southern Oregon I have learned from many families including my own that the current police crisis system is not working for many, and a CAHOOTS style program as in Eugene and now in Lents/Portland would be an important humanizing step for Jackson county.   HB 2417 sets in motion with small but targeted funding an important incentive for our community. We are already collaborating for a CAHOOTS program here but the financial incentives in this bill will allow local cities/counties to get pilots off the ground.
Thank you for hearing this bill early in the session, and I strongly urge you vote yes in a work session,