



TO: Oregon Legislature
House Committee on Behavioral Health

FROM: Kelly Madding, Deputy City Manager
City of Medford

DATE: HB 2417 Support

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on HB 2417. The City of Medford is enthusiastic about the legislature's shared commitment to mental health issues and services. We support this avenue for responding to the needs of so many Oregonians but offer one modification to improve the bill.

On October 8, 2020 the Medford City Council heard a presentation on Eugene's CAHOOTS model. At that time, the Council directed staff to work with Jackson County and our local Coordinated Care Organization's on doing a feasibility study of initiating a CAHOOTS-like model in Medford and possibly our neighboring cities and/or all of Jackson County. There is largely agreement in our area that this model would be beneficial. Yet, to advance this program locally there will need to be funds from the State and/or federal government. Medford is encouraged that Congressman Wyden has put forward the Crisis Assistance Helping Out On the Streets (CAHOOTS) Act and grateful to the authors of this Oregon bill, especially Representative Pam Marsh.

The City of Medford would encourage to move this bill forward but suggests an amendment that would:

- 1) Have the State fund 80% of a program
- 2) Restrict to funding no more than two mobile crisis intervention teams for Cities over 80,000 in population or a combination of cities with adjacent boundaries that exceed 80,000 in population.

While the City of Medford is thankful that you are hearing this important piece of legislation, we also ask you to consider sustainability. If Medford were to embark upon this program we would need some direction, sideboards and assistance to ensure long-term viability. COVID-19 has brought with it many lessons, and one of them is you have to be careful that what you start you can continue. Perhaps more conversation as to what would be needed to allow interested cities to continue programs is in order.

We appreciate your public service.