

Chair and members of the committee, I am Megan Cooper. I'm a nursing student with OHSU, here as a part of Nursing Students Without Borders. I currently live in Jackson County where I attend school, but am from Linn County, OR.

I am testifying in favor of this bill today because I have learned in nursing school that holistic health is what is important. This means that you not only treat physical illness, but also mental, emotional, and social. CAHOOTs would be an incredible addition to Southern Oregon. We lack many mental health resources, especially for children. I did a rotation at the behavioral health unit during the previous term, and learned that placement to proper facilities that can provide care for those who have undergone a mental health crisis, is abysmal. Especially during a pandemic. The staff told me of a teenage girl who had been in the ED for 3 months awaiting placement at a facility, just so she could be properly evaluated and cared for.

I know CAHOOTs does not provide residence at a facility, but it is most definitely a step in the right direction. It allows for people to get the help they need, exactly where they are. Mental health, like physical health, is a basic right that should be shared by all humans, regardless of their backgrounds. CAHOOTs provides this kind of care, and therefore deserves to be part of this community.

Thank you for your time.