

As a County Commissioner and foster child mentor/ advocate, I am concerned about the overprescribing of psychiatric medications to children in foster care.

As a mentor to 3 children in foster care, who were all prescribed multiple psychiatric medications, including one 16 year old who was being prescribed 5 different such medications, I began to look into the prevalence of this practice.

My journey to document the overprescribing of psychiatric medications for children in Oregon's foster system led me on a circuitous path from agency to agency wherein I received very little information.

Why was this data largely unavailable, especially in light of the reports showing Oregon's rates of prescribing are higher than the national average? I sought, for the better part of a year to get data on the numbers of children in State care who were on 1 or more psychiatric drug. I was alternately told the information was unavailable, it wasn't tracked or recorded or sharing it would violate the privacy of children in our State/ Yamhill County. I was also assured the numbers of children prescribed psychiatric drugs was " very low"-how would we know that if the numbers weren't being tracked as a data set?

If we don't know the levels of prescribing, we can't address the problem of overprescribing.

Parents, foster parents and the children who are subjected to these powerful chemical interventions which have lifelong ramifications and can cause permanent changes in the brain, deserve more.

On behalf of the families impacted, I strongly support HB 2333.

Mary Starrett

Chair, Yamhill County Board of Commissioners, Liaison, Yamhill County Health and Human Services,
Foster Child Mentor/ Advocate