

Strengthening Oregon's mandatory reporting system

Why it matters

Every child deserves to be nurtured and kept safe by those responsible for their care. While most parents and caregivers can provide adequate care and protection to their children, others may struggle to keep their children safe and well cared for. In cases where children face safety threats at home, they must rely on others, including mandatory reporters of child abuse, to help ensure their safety.



Background

ODHS employees are mandatory reporters of child abuse under [ORS 419B.010](#). ODHS employees must also comply with [ORS 411.320](#), which requires that we keep confidential the records of anyone who applies for or receives public benefits, like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. The law says that these records can only be released for reasons related to the administration of those public benefit programs.

Risk

Together, ORS 419B.010 and 411.320 result in a conflict for ODHS employees who are required to report abuse yet also to hold confidentiality. This conflict has the potential to **delay or hinder a necessary report of abuse** if the child's caregiver is involved with the public benefits system.

Solution

To resolve the conflicting requirements, ODHS has SB 210, which would change Oregon statute to indicate that child abuse reporting is an exception to the confidentiality laws which protect public assistance client files.

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