

March 11, 2025

CareOregon Support for HB 3146

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Nelson and Javati, & Members of the Committee,

CareOregon is a community non-profit organization serving over 500,000 Oregonians covered by the Oregon Health Plan. We have served Oregonians for over 30 years. CareOregon wholly owns two coordinated care organizations (CCOs), Jackson Care Connect and Columbia Pacific CCO. We are a founding member of Health Share of Oregon, managing an integrated community network and the behavioral health benefit for all Health Share of Oregon members in the Portland Metro area.

CareOregon supports HB 3146, creating the opportunity for communities across Oregon to provide low-barrier emergency housing for people awaiting a substance use disorder (SUD) residential treatment bed. This support is informed by our experience working to connect some of our most vulnerable CCO members with the SUD residential treatment they need.

The intersection of homelessness and substance use disorders represents a difficult challenge to overcome. Traditional approaches often create a paradoxical situation: individuals must demonstrate sobriety to access housing, yet achieving stable recovery without safe housing remains nearly impossible. A low-barrier, housing-first approach provides an off-ramp to stability, making connections to treatment, and ultimately recovery, more attainable. In response to the lack of low-barrier emergency housing in Medford, Jackson Care Connect provided funding and partnered with Oasis Center of the Rogue Valley and OnTrack Rogue Valley to convert an existing building into a 12-bed facility. With these new beds, we can better meet our members where they are in their desire to seek SUD treatment, keep them engaged, and create a smoother transition into a residential treatment setting.

We appreciate Representative Marsh and Senator Reynolds bringing this bill forward and urge the Committee to support other communities across Oregon in creating a stable foundation upon which recovery can be built.

Thank you,

Stefan Shearer
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CareOregon