

April 2, 2025

Representative Hartman, Chair
House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Multnomah County's Support for Oregon HB 2061

Chair Hartman and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Multnomah County Department of County Human Services to express my strong support for HB 2601, establishing a task force on the recruitment and retention of case managers and adult protective services workers. This legislation is crucial to maintain and support a workforce of skilled and compassionate people who can help connect older adults and people with disabilities to necessary programs, services, and protection from harm. I would also like to express my gratitude for the support of Representatives Elmer and Scharf in sponsoring this bill and proposing that the task force be formed.

Critical Human Services Roles Addressed

These positions are not only required by Federal Medicaid statute, but offer the necessary checks and balances within the long-term care system to protect our most vulnerable individuals.

- Case managers are a necessary, critical, and required position that enables an older adult or person with a disability to find the correct programs and services once they are deemed eligible. Medicaid case managers continue to monitor and engage with people on their caseloads to ensure their safety, their needs are being met, and the state remains in Federal compliance with regulatory requirements.
- Adult protective services workers take immediate action when there is reported and suspected abuse. They are often the first line of defense for an older adult or person with disability who may be facing harm. Adult Protective Services (APS) workers are tasked with going into difficult, complex and at times dangerous situations in order to investigate and initiate appropriate interventions when abuse is reported.

Key Reasons for Support

- Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) which administer Medicaid, including Multnomah County, serve approximately 60% of the state's Medicaid caseload for long-term services and supports (LTSS).
- Statewide, AAAs have seen a decline in individuals seeking positions as case managers and APS workers. We also see a trend of workers choosing to leave their positions and seek other job opportunities.
- Over 60,000 Multnomah County residents receive eligibility determinations, services, and ongoing support from our case managers each year – an increase of approximately 10,000 over the past four years.

- Multnomah County Adult Protective Services workers review and respond to over 9,000 reports of abuse each year.

Statewide, AAA teams experience challenges to workforce satisfaction and retention, including: increasing caseloads and expectations, administrative burden, emphasis on quantitative metrics, and workplace stress and emotional strain.

Specific Challenges for the Multnomah County APS/LTSS Workforce

- Multnomah County's cost of living is higher than other areas in the state, which is not accounted for in the state funding model for compensation.
- Residents of Multnomah County span a broad array of cultures and languages, requiring that we recruit workers with the knowledge and skills to appropriately serve our participants.
- The turnover rate for Multnomah County service case managers is 54% over the past 4 years.
- Job offerings for similar skill sets are plentiful in our area, with many hospitals, clinics, and nonprofits employing case managers in Multnomah County.

Forming a task force will not require additional State resources. HB 2601 will allow Area Agencies on Aging to collaborate with the Oregon Department of Human Services to understand the issues and concerns facing the workforce, examine the responsibilities of these positions, and improve recruitment and retention efforts for these essential roles. I strongly urge you to act in support of HB 2601.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Mohammad Bader, Department Director
Multnomah County Department of Human Services