

April 9, 2025

TO: Co-Chairs Prozanski and Kropf and members of the Joint Committee On
Addiction and Community Safety Response

FROM: Association of Oregon Counties Legislative Affairs Manager, Jessica Pratt

RE: SB 610

Dear Co-Chairs Prozanski and Kropf and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Association of Oregon Counties, representing Oregon's county governments, I ask for your support to improve transparency and accountability in how funding decisions are made for Behavioral Health Resource Networks statewide and provide more stability for the critical substance abuse response capacity that has been created with this funding stream. While AOC has not had a chance to take a position on the forthcoming changes to SB 610, this reform work is a top priority for counties, and we are grateful for legislative leaders' active role in building a coalition of stakeholder support to make long-needed process improvements.

The services provided by Oregon's BHRN grantees have become a critical part of the local behavioral health safety net which counties are statutorily responsible to plan and oversee. Community mental health programs serving 31 of our 36 counties receive BHRN grants and are reliant on these dollars to fill critical system gaps that are not covered by Medicaid.

The state's process for allocating these resources ought to:

- honor Oregon's proud tradition of open government,
- be transparent and responsive to public comment,

- have a practical connection to the local mental health authority and the expertise of our community mental health programs
- and prioritize stability in grant making to buffer local behavioral health systems against inevitable fluctuations in the cannabis tax revenue that funds the BHRNs.

The ongoing failure of the current process to meet these expectations requires corrective measures be taken now.

The urgency to make these fixes is compounded by the reliance of our county deflection programs on the treatment and support capacity of their Behavioral Health Resource Networks. Many of our deflection coordinators tell us that their programs simply will not work without their current BHRN capacity.

We look forward to working with you in the coming days to find consensus on solutions which ensure good governance of this revenue stream and provide maximum stability for the services that our communities and our county deflection programs rely on to support individuals on their path to recovery from problem substance use.

And thank you for partnering with AOC and counties to serve all of Oregon.

Jessica Pratt
Legislative Affairs Manager
Association of Oregon Counties