

April 23, 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: HB 2481 & HB 2488

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 would like to highlight four important principles for any reform impacting court-mandated community behavioral health services. While AOC has not had a chance to take a position on the changes to HB 2481 and HB 2488 discussed today, these principles are critical as you contemplate the content and consequences of these bills.

- The first is time limits for community aid and assist restoration.
 - Counties are the local mental health authority responsible for court-ordered aid and assist community restoration services, civil commitment investigation and services, and mobile crisis response, among others.
 - Individuals ordered to community aid and assist restoration are not compelled to participate in services and those who do not engage often cannot be located for outreach by service providers. The current lack of time limits for community restoration creates unchecked cost and liability to counties and our local providers.
 - Last year's [Department of Administrative Services report](#) found this has led to an inability of counties and providers to find affordable, if any, insurance coverage, putting county governments and our current and developing service capacity at potentially catastrophic risk. One of the report

recommendations to mitigate the risk and increase insurability is to establish jurisdictional length for Aid and Assist community restoration services.

- Second, jail-based or ‘in custody’ aid and assist restoration services will not be feasible without codifying strong liability protections for both counties and our service providers
- Third, we need to carefully analyze any new or increased cost drivers in these bills and allocate the commensurate funding in order to avoid setting ourselves up for failure and exposing communities and individuals to greater harm.
- And finally, all of these contemplated reforms are predicated on our community mental health programs’ capacity to serve the existing caseloads in civil commitment, community restoration and crisis response and yet recent cost and capacity studies have revealed a \$68.4M biennial funding gap for these services and a severe shortage of residential treatment beds, and so we must start by funding the investments in HB 2056 & HB 2059 to serve these caseloads and for the development of needed residential treatment facilities statewide.

We look forward to continuing to work with you and our partners in the coming days to find consensus on solutions which ensure the health and safety of individuals and communities in our state-county partnership to provide civil commitment and aid and assist restoration services.

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

Jessica Pratt
Legislative Affairs Manager
Association of Oregon Counties