

June **DRAFT**, 2023

The Honorable Tina Kotek
900 Court Street, Suite 254
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Investments in Behavioral Health

Dear Governor Kotek:

We wish to offer our collective appreciation for your continued engagement with Clackamas County as we enhance our services focused on substance use and addiction recovery.

Per your request, we have submitted support for the behavioral health investments (mental health and substance use) in SB 1044. We are hopeful this bill or this funding passes in some form at the state legislature. Clackamas County as a Community Mental Health Program (CMHP) will be able to take advantage of this funding in many ways. For individuals with mental illness facing civil commitment proceedings, we aim to create a mobile in-reach team that can respond within the first three judicial days of the hold and guide people toward either voluntary services or connection with treatment services and appropriate housing. Likewise, jail diversion funding is a key priority for the county. We currently contract with Oregon Health Authority to meet state mandated requirements, but the current funding only allows for a single FTE to accomplish these contractual goals. The additional funding here will be welcome, but shared amongst 32 CMHPs will mean we can only use this funding to modestly enhance peer support programs, which should be part of the entire continuum of recovery services.

Whether funding from SB 1044 comes directly to CMHPs or through a Request for Proposal for both county and community-based providers to apply for, one critical element of this funding would be to allow it to be as flexible as possible. An example of flexible funds is HB 5202, Behavioral Health Housing Investment, these funds can be used for both infrastructure and for ongoing operations.

The \$15 million in SB 1044 dedicated to substance use disorder facilities and recovery centers is a substantial opportunity to partner with the state and ensure the third most populated county in Oregon has this critical infrastructure. We aim to begin working with our community based organizations (CBOs) to make sure they are in a position to receive this funding to expand into Clackamas. While Clackamas County is the primary provider of outpatient substance use and mental health services to individuals on the Oregon Health Plan and those who are uninsured, we have a long history of supporting local CBOs in the development of more intensive services such

as residential programs through one-time startup costs and letters of support. CBOs are in a better position to stretch these funds farther than the county and by having the CBO apply directly, versus the county applying and then contracting these services out, it reduces the administrative burden in the system.

As you noted in our last correspondence, there are other resources available in the state that can help address addiction treatment and recovery. Seventeen CBOs in the county received awards from the initial round of Behavioral Health Resource Network (BHRN) grants, and over the next eighteen years the county will directly receive a total of \$13 million from the broader Opioid Settlement. Nevertheless, we are keen to see there is adequate infrastructure in Clackamas County so these services have the firm foundation to establish a trusted role within the community.

We will look to your support to make sure adequate funding opportunities are available, like what is described in SB 1044. Counties do this work daily, and we need less state mandates and more direct flexible funding to allocate dollars in locally strategic ways. We hear directly from our communities where needs exist, and to be nimble we need your help to secure dollars that have local control.

We very much believe this is work we can do together, and appreciate your partnership in the mission to help Oregonians overcome the obstacles of addiction.

Sincerely,

DRAFT

Tootie Smith, Chair
On behalf of the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners