

Testimony submitted to the Joint Subcommittee on Human Services

*Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> 2015*

Co-Chair Bates and Co-Chair Nathanson, members of the committee, for the record name is Royce Bowlin, I am a Senior Clinical Director for Cascadia and the current President for Oregon's Residential Provider Association. Thank you for this opportunity to talk to you today about the Addictions and Mental Health Budget.

As you have heard, and will hear today the need for a greater investment into the addictions and mental health system is tremendous. At Cascadia we provide services to those who suffer from severe and persistent mental health as well as those who suffer from Substance use disorder. And often, and this is important, these two clinically recognized conditions appear in the same person.

This is why I want to express my support for Senator Courtney's Mental Health package which focuses on both mental health AND addictions. This package represents a longer-term investment towards improving the health and wellbeing of all Oregonians

We also offer our support and welcome our involvement on any potential changes with regard to transforming the mental health system. We are invested in moving the dial towards improved outcomes in mental health, addictions, and overall health for all Oregonians. We want to make sure that any changes we make, whether they are at the state or local levels, or within the delivery system, keeps the client at the forefront of the conversations. Client involvement is paramount to our success.

I'd like to highlight and thank you for the key investments from the 2013 legislative session: Peer Delivered Services and Coordination, Mental Health Promotion and Intervention, Crisis Services, Assertive Community Treatment, Diversion, and Supported Housing. These services will keep individuals in their community and out of more expensive types of services. This also provides an opportunity for individuals to be served with dignity and surrounded by their natural supports.

In addition, the data supports that through these types of investments we will see a reduction in overall health care expenses. Studies show mental illness is nearly universal among the highest-cost, most frequently hospitalized beneficiaries, and the presence of mental illness and / or drug and alcohol disorders is associated with substantially higher per capita costs and hospitalization rates. For example the cost of managing diabetes for an individual without mental health or addiction issues annually was \$9,498. When you add addictions and mental health the annual cost goes up to \$36,730, or a 287% increase. Through this investment we will have even more of an impact on reducing the cost of health care to a very vulnerable group of individuals.

Based on documented evidence and my experience as a mental health provider over the past 20-years, I believe we can move forward with improving the lives of all Oregonians through early intervention and promotion of healthy mental health. This funding package is a great start in this direction and through the continued integration of physical and behavioral health we will continue to improve the well-being of everyone. Thank you for your time and consideration.