

Subject: House Bill 5005 OHCS Budget – Permanent Supportive Housing Investment

To: Co-Chair Senator Girod, Co-Chair Representative Holvey and all the members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction

From: Mercedes Elizalde, Public Policy Director, Central City Concern

Date: 4/11/2019

Central City Concern writes in support of the Governor's request for \$50 million General Obligation Bonds for supportive housing development.

Central City Concern is a non-profit direct service organization that provides integrated primary and behavioral health care, supportive and affordable housing, and employment services to people impacted by homelessness in the Tri-County area. Central City Concern operates about 2,000 units of affordable housing, serves 9,000 patients annually through our 13 Federally Qualified Health Centers, makes 1,200 job placements annually and operates social services for the community justice programs in Multnomah and Clackamas counties. This year we are celebrating 40 years of service to our communities.

When people are safely and stably housed, communities are healthier and stronger. We are excited to see the state and our local government partners prioritize funding for permanent supportive housing (PSH). We hear from both community and government partners that they want to see a visible difference for people most impacted by homelessness and poverty who are currently living unsheltered.

- **Supportive Housing must be taken to scale to see a visible difference in homelessness**
 - We have a general housing shortage across the state, development needs to be a priority.
 - Government investment in the capital side of PSH makes it possible for nonprofit service organizations like CCC to deliver the housing to those being left behind due to housing scarcity. The market has not and will not serve people with the lowest incomes who have complex health and social needs.
 - Capital investments and on-going service dollars must be executed concurrently if supportive housing is going to be successful
 - Only PSH can adequately address chronic homelessness by targeting services for people with the most complex health needs, especially single adults

- **Single adults experiencing unsheltered homelessness are the largest and growing group of people experiencing homelessness**
 - In Oregon, the [2018 HUD report](#) showed there were 14,476 people experiencing homelessness, 7,112 or 49% are unsheltered single adults. When the number of sheltered single adults is including, single adults make up 77% of people experiencing homelessness.
 - To make the biggest impact on homelessness we need greater focus on single adults, especially on people living unsheltered
 - We need to prioritize key interventions alongside housing investments. PSH is housing plus services to addressing untreated or undertreated substance use disorder & mental health needs, eliminating barriers for people with past criminal justice involvement and provide employment & economic support
 - We need to invest more in solutions we know work. There is great work being done, but our systems are built for thousands when we need to serve tens of thousands

If local communities want a visible difference in street homelessness and long shelter stays, PSH for single adults living unsheltered needs to be a priority. Service dollars paired with capital dollars to build supportive housing should target those most in need, especially: people who are experiencing chronic homelessness, serious and persistent mental illness and/or other health complications such as substance use disorder, cognitive impairments from traumatic brain injuries and people with other chronic debilitating health conditions.

The proposed \$50 million makes commitment to capital investments. The Statewide Housing Plan looks increase supportive housing development with a goal of 1,000 new supportive housing units. We support this goal and we hope you do as well. In order to move forward with this stated goal for permanent supportive housing the legislature has an opportunity to make important capital investments.

We urge you to support deep investments in housing development and supportive housing services. You can do this by passing HB 5005 as is or with additional allocations for supportive housing development.

Thank you,

Mercedes Elizalde
Public Policy Director
Central City Concern