



Testimony in support of SB 414 – School Threat Assessment System

February 16, 2017

Dear Chair Roblan and Members of Senate Committee on Education,

On behalf of the Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP), I would like to express support for SB 414, directing the Department of Education to establish a school-based threat assessment system, as a promising practice that can reduce the threat of harm to self or others in school settings. We agree that school threat assessment teams should include both behavioral health and law enforcement representatives, as the threat is much more likely to be self-harm or suicide.

While we support this bill, the emphasis is more on homicidal risk than suicidal risk. Considering suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth ages 10-24, we believe the process and protocols for suicide prevention could be improved. To this point, we would add protocols for timely, and in some cases, immediate referrals to community behavioral health services in addition to law enforcement and the juvenile justice system (d)(E).

Secondly, concerning the multidisciplinary team's make up, Lines 9 and 10, page 2, "a representative of a local mental health department, a representative of a county mental health department", we would change this wording to read, "a representative of a local mental health authority or a community mental health program".

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 414 and suggestions for minor language changes.

Sincerely,

Cherryl L. Ramirez

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Director, AOCMHP