



Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

Department of Human Services

Addictions and Mental Health Division

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July 6, 2009

Dear Colleagues:

I understand the extreme stress you and your staff have endured over the past six months as legislators agonized on how to cut \$2 billion in state services. Now that the session is over and the tough decisions have been made, I want to extend my sincerest appreciation for all your letters, telephone calls and conversations with legislators in support of our programs. I believe it was your personal stories of success and recovery that gave lawmakers a clear understanding of the life-changing programs we can offer thousands of Oregonians and their families every year.

Thanks to a bipartisan effort, the service budget remains mostly intact including funds dedicated to continued improvements at the Oregon State Hospital and uninterrupted service at Blue Mountain Recovery Center. In addition, funding for programs such as Intensive Treatment and Recovery Services that reunites families and keeps parents and their children together while in recovery will continue into the next biennium.


Other proposed cuts to outpatient drug, alcohol and mental health treatment services were avoided by an injection of \$541 million in federal stimulus funds dedicated to Medicaid. These dollars in combination with the provider tax will allow the Department of Human Services (DHS) to expand the Oregon Health Plan (OHP). The increased match rate by the federal government will allow DHS to add 80,000 children and 35,000 adults to its OHP standard plan at less cost to the state.

While our service budget advocates tallied countless victories this legislative season, there were some losses. Perhaps the most significant to our providers is the elimination of cost of living allowances. Without a service payment increase, I anticipate a reduction in services. Another hit to our service catalogue includes the elimination of Supported Employment. Last year this program helped 280 mentally ill Oregonians find jobs, learn skills and maintain employment. In addition, Oregon's nationally recognized program for treating problem gambling shrunk by 15 percent and the drug and alcohol prevention budget was cut by 21 percent or \$2.3 million.

If you need this letter in alternate format, please call 503-945-5763 (Voice) or 800-375-2863 (TTY)

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Budget Information
July 6, 2009
Page 2

In a final action legislators provided additional funding for the Oregon Partnership suicide hotline and restored nearly \$322,000 for the Drug Free Workplace program. These last minute additions totaled more than \$800,000.

I understand this is a time of disappointment for some and a time celebration for others. But, as we begin a new biennium please continue your fight to save services in your community and statewide. It is my promise that those of us here at AMH will do the same.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Harris', written in a cursive style.

Richard Harris
Interim Assistant Director