

June 10, 2020

Dear Governor Brown, Senate President Courtney, and House Speaker Kotek:

As Council Members of the Children's System of Care Advisory Council, we are deeply concerned about the statewide impact agency cuts will have on families raising children and youth who are experiencing complex mental health needs. **We request you fully fund the range of critical services and supports outlined in SB1 and SB221A so that these children and youth can be successful in their communities.**

In 2019, the Oregon Legislature passed SB1 and funded investments outlined in SB221A to provide for a more integrated System of Care for children, youth, and families needing services and supports from multiple child serving systems. Budget cuts to the General Fund that impact the System of Care have the potential to take Oregon back decades. The result will be a fragmented system that causes families to struggle in finding needed support or services within their own community.

If reductions are required, we reluctantly agree reductions of up to 33% of general funds allocated for the 2019-2021 biennium for all projects related to SB1 and SB221A could be considered. Reductions would include funds identified for:

- **Therapeutic Foster Care**
- **Special Purpose Appropriation to support Prevention services under the Federal "Family First Act"**
- **Intensive In-Home Behavioral Health Treatment**
- **Crisis and Transition Services**
- **Regional Assessment Teams**

Additionally, we feel strongly that these projects must be fully supported during the 2021-2023 biennium as they are essential to support children and families through a time of uncertainty and widespread suffering.

We believe in preserving and protecting the System of Care because of the value it brings to the lives of children, youth and their families. Specifically, the System of Care:

- Integrates care planning and management across multiple levels of care;
- Recognizes disability as a natural and healthy part of the human experience;
- Is culturally and linguistically competent;
- Is designed to build meaningful partnerships with children, youth, and families in development of policy, along with the management and delivery of services;
- Has supportive policy and management infrastructure at state and local levels, and;
- Is community based with relationships at the local level.

The attributes of the System of Care naturally lend it to build upon itself, building strength and resiliency in children, youth, and families. These services provide real and lasting change for children, youth, and families reducing future costs in the System of Care.

Crisis and challenging times can also drive innovation. In this environment, we encourage state agencies to consider a bold approach. **When total cuts are known to individual state agencies across the Children's System of Care, we encourage a review of proposed cuts through a zero-based budgeting concept.**

Further, we request that state agencies examine and prioritize opportunities to blend funding across agencies both for the short term and long term in a meaningful way. This approach does not exist in the current system.

Maintaining the 2019 Legislative investments to Children's System of Care is more vital than ever before – when families are still struggling so much to recover from the impact of COVID-19.

We believe the foundation that was created through Senate Bill 1 and Senate Bill 221A will offer families hope, and give Oregon a strong foundation on which to build the future.

In closing I feel it is important to note a majority, but not all Council Members support the content of this letter. **Multiple Council Members were unable to support accepting any recommendations related to budget cuts to the Children's System of Care.** Finally, no state agency employees participated in development of this letter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Rodakowski', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Adam Rodakowski, MSW
Chairperson, Children's System of Care Advisory Council