

**Draft CWAC letter regarding  
A&D treatment resources for Child Welfare clients.**

DATE:

TO: Erinn Kelley-Siel, Director  
Department of Human Services

Bruce Goldberg, M.D., Director  
Oregon Health Authority

FROM: Mike Balter, Chair  
Child Welfare Advisory Committee

SUBJECT: Alcohol and Drug Treatment and Mental Health Resources for Child  
Welfare Clients

The Child Welfare Advisory Committee is developing its work plan for the next 18-24 months. We organize our work under the following four priorities:

1. Identifying strategies to reduce over-representation of children of color in the child welfare system.
2. Preventing foster care placement.
3. Assuring that children placed in foster care are safe and thriving.
4. Providing permanency for children placed in foster care in a timely manner.

On April 22, 2007, we submitted a letter to then-DHS Director Goldberg expressing our concern that one barrier to decreasing the need for foster care is the lack of A&D and mental health treatment. As a result, children go into and remain in foster care while their parents wait for treatment. Dr. Goldberg's May 29, 2007, response agreed that this was a "major, if not THE major issue, impacting the foster care system." The committee was delighted to learn that child welfare clients were given priority status for the available treatment resources.

With the passage of HB 2009 and the creation of the Oregon Health Authority, committee members again became concerned that this prioritization may be jeopardized with the move of funding of treatment resources to the OHA. The DHS and OHA interagency agreement that prioritizes child welfare clients for the

resources that exist offers reassurance that the agencies remain committed to ensuring these critical services are available for this population.

As Oregon continues to struggle with budget reductions, CWAC wishes to reiterate its commitment to the above four priorities for the child welfare system. We respectfully request DHS and OHA to hold firm in their decision to prioritize parents of children in the system for available A&D and mental health treatment resources.

Thank you.