



Taking action for basic human needs.



HSCO 2014 Legislative Directive

The Human Services Coalition of Oregon (HSCO) is a well-established group of advocates and organizations with the goal of creating a place for collaboration, partnership, and dialogue between health, housing and human service providers. We work as a collective to advocate for increased revenue for these critical community investments.

With this goal in mind, HSCO is taking a firm stance in support of the following budget topics and legislation that seek to protect and enhance critical services to Oregon's most vulnerable populations.

Budget

\$26 Million Senior Services Special Purpose Appropriation (SPA)

As indicated in the budget summary of HB 5101, \$26 million general fund dollars were set aside in a special purpose appropriation to the Emergency Board for future distribution to programs or activities supporting seniors. HSCO supports the budget allocation recommendations put forth by the Campaign for Oregon Seniors and People with Disabilities.

It is important to remember that these funds were derived from changes in what has commonly been referred to as the Senior Medical Deduction (SMD). HSCO and other advocates - and legislators - have always believed that any savings from changes to the senior medical deduction be reinvested in services for seniors and people with disabilities. The allocation of the SPA is in keeping with that position. However, it should be noted that the changes made to the SMD in HB 3601 generate significant savings in the out-years beyond the current 2013-15 budget (see projections by LRO).

While some of the proposed expenditures are one-time in nature, HSCO firmly believes that a majority of future savings from the SMD should also be allocated to services to seniors to ensure access to quality programs, services and activities that support the values of choice, independence and dignity (ORS 410).

DHS/OHA 2% Budget Holdback

HSCO asks our legislators and agency leaders to consider the human cost of enacting severe reductions to critical services for children, families, seniors and others who are among Oregon's most vulnerable populations. HSCO looks forward to working with legislators on budget decisions that ensure any holdback reductions will not affect services to those who need them most.

State Homeless Assistance Program/Emergency Housing Account

In order for Oregon to achieve the goals we have set for our state's health, education and economic growth, we must ensure that everyone has a safe place to call home. The ongoing impacts of the recession mean that too many families and individuals are forced to choose between paying their rent and putting food on the table.



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There are two programs - the Emergency Housing Account (EHA) and the State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP) that provide short term assistance to help prevent or end homelessness. EHA and SHAP help people who are homeless or fleeing domestic violence to quickly enter safe, stable housing.

HSCO asks for the restoration of General Fund dollars to the Emergency Housing Account (EHA) and the State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP) to 2007 levels by allocating \$1.5 Million to EHA and \$0.5 Million to SHAP for the second year of this biennium.

Employment Related Day Care

HSCO is asking the legislature to fill a \$6.4 million hole in Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) so that the program can serve the 9,000 families (average over the biennium) set in the 2013–2015 budget adopted by the Legislature.

ERDC is a critical work support strategy for Oregon parents with kids in the home, who represent nearly one-third of the state's workforce, but the current budget hole threatens to close the program for much of the biennium.

If lawmakers fail to provide \$6.4M, the program will be limited to 8100 families, the lowest number ever. Oregon has received a federal dollars bonus of \$1.7m for FY14 which should be directed to ERDC; the remaining amount is general fund.

211 Info - \$1.1million Technology Grant

211 is a vital service that connects those in need with a wide array of service providers throughout Oregon. However, 211 is not currently available to all citizens 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The technology grant will be used to fund statewide expansion of the current service to serve all Oregonians at any time of need. Often, requests for services come at off hours and during crisis events. The grant will also fund ongoing upgrades to the system to better connect people directly with services, to shorten wait times, and to track where there is open program availability.



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Legislation

Understanding that public policy which protects critical services to vulnerable populations throughout Oregon requires strong advocacy, HSCO is urging legislators to please support the following bills:

[HB 4151](#) – Elder Abuse Protection

- A result of the Elder Abuse Work Group created in 2009, focuses on increasing the protections for vulnerable adults in Oregon.
- The bill also changes the elder abuse investigation completion requirements, clarifies the definition of “neglect” and “sexual abuse” for the purpose of elderly persons and residents of long term care facilities, and establishes a DHS registry for persons working or seeking to work in certain facilities providing care to vulnerable persons.

[HB 4108](#) – Durable Medical Supply Pilot

- The bill requires OHA to contract with a nonprofit organization to operate a pilot project to provide used durable medical equipment to medical assistance recipients.

[HB 4109](#) – Basic Health Program Study

- Requires OHA to commission an independent study of costs and impacts of operating a basic health program in Oregon.

[HB 4154](#) – Cover Oregon Enrollment Extension, Additional Changes

- The bill extends open enrollment for Cover Oregon through April, funds a high-risk pool, and seeks federal subsidies for qualified consumers and small businesses who obtained insurance outside Cover Oregon.
- Creates whistleblower protections for exchange employees and gives the Governor the authority to re-appoint the entire board of Cover Oregon, if needed.

The following bills have been approved by both chambers. HSCO backed these measures and thanks Oregon legislators for their support.

[HB 4090](#) – Summer After-School Meal Programs Extension

- This will extend after-school meal programs to include the summer term.

[HB 4114](#) – Protected Persons Special Advocate Bill

- This authorizes the court to appoint a special advocate for vulnerable seniors who suffer from capacity impairments. These advocates will monitor existing court guardianships to ensure that protected persons are receiving adequate and appropriate services.