



The impact of the proposed jobs reductions for 2007-09

Removing the ability to serve clients through the end of this biennium.

The proposed budget cuts presented from Legislative Fiscal to Ways & Means present options to balance current budgets by eliminating field staff.

There are important provisions of the proposed cut to the **field staff structure** that will not only impact our clients but will also impact unemployment and jobs at the local level.

- Eliminating field staff will **endanger our ability** to be in compliance with Medicaid regulations to receive the full benefit of federal match and enhanced federal stimulus dollars
- Losing over 25% of our field staff would endanger seniors and people with disabilities who rely on their case manager to keep an eye out for their safety and well being
- This cut would likely cause **shift costs out of in-home care into higher cost settings**
- Given union contracts with our field staff, layoffs would have to occur in less than 3 months. This is virtually un-doable in the time frame suggested.
- This could result in closing offices around the state leaving geographic areas without support
- This jeopardizes Adult Protective Services work which is primarily responsible for client safety and following up on reports of abuse to seniors and people with disabilities
- Local government runs the risk of being out of compliance with contracts with the state due to inadequate staffing.
- Many individuals working in this system will lose their own jobs and economic foundation.

Since the budget cuts in 2001-03, we have seen a drop in the number of Oregon's seniors and people with disabilities who can live in their own homes. Over the last year, we've seen the first increases in nursing home caseloads in over 15 years.

These are predictable consequences of dismantling the expansive, *cost effective* and innovative homecare system Oregon used to have.

If we continue to further dismantle this system, costs will continue to rise and at some point, because of the entitlement nature of Medicaid funded long-term care, Oregon will wind up spending more money than they ever saved.

Oregon's unique system of long-term care has a foundation built on the work of our field staff – case managers, eligibility staff and others that guide seniors and people with disabilities through the very complex Medicaid eligibility process. This process is time intensive and often very confusing to navigate. Eligibility staff insures that clients are able to access the help they need to survive safely and as independently as possible.



Case managers are the front door to the long-term care system, working with each individual to be sure they have a plan for case management that not only meets their needs but also *places clients in the appropriate and least restrictive, cost effective setting possible while carefully utilizing state dollars and seeking cost avoidance whenever possible*. Case managers pull together natural supports such as family, local social services, Meals programs, volunteer support and state funded services in a way that maximizes independence and decreases higher cost settings as often as possible. They stay in touch with clients to assure their safety and stable long term care placement or in home service plan. They often perform above and beyond the call of duty.

As reported by the recent EcoNW study, for every \$1 million lost in Federal match in this service sector, Oregon loses \$1.6 million in economic activity. We will not only be losing jobs, but also losing forward momentum to rebuild Oregon's economy.

Now is the time for smart solutions to deal with tough times. Cutting out the foundation of our long-term care system is not the right policy direction for Oregon.

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