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January 10, 2017

Oregon Criminal Justice Commission
885 Summer St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Letter of Support for Marion County Mental Health Treatment Court

Dear Grant Administrator:

Please accept this letter of support for Marion County Mental Health Treatment Court's application for the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission General Fund Treatment Court Program, Fiscal Year 2017-2019.

The Marion County Mental Health Treatment Court was created in 2005 through the collaborative efforts of Marion County Mental Health Division, Salem Housing Authority, Marion County Housing Authority, Oregon Department of Human Services Vocational Rehabilitation Division, and Bridgeway Recovery Services.

Modeled after drug courts and developed in response to the overrepresentation of people with mental illness in the criminal justice system, mental health courts divert selected defendants with mental illness from incarceration into judicially-supervised, community-based treatment. Defendants are invited to participate in the mental health court following a specialized screening and assessment. A team of court staff, social services, and mental health professionals works together to develop treatment plans and supervise participants in the community. Participants agree to the terms and conditions of community-based supervision, including substance abuse and co-occurring treatment, attendance at court for 18 months, with the goal of having the criminal charges dismissed. They attend from one to three times monthly, depending on risk scores and their progress in meeting the requirements of probation.

Many clients benefit from the Marion County Mental Health Court Treatment Court. Those involved in the program are leading safe, supported lives in our community, managing their mental health care with fewer law enforcement contacts. Through its proposal, the Marion County Mental Health Court seeks funding to serve indigent clients, ensure the provision of evidence-based services, secure staff training and expand participant behavioral treatment opportunities.

The Marion County Public Safety Coordinating Council offers our support for the Marion County Mental Health Treatment Court's 2017-2019 Criminal Justice Commission Drug Court Grant application.

Sincerely,

Commissioner Janet Carlson
Council Chair