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Statewide council will improve services to youth

SB 1: Establishes System of Care Advisory Council

SALEM – Kids with intensive needs who are at risk of out-of-home placement will have new hope for services, with the passage of Senate Bill 1.

[Senate Bill 1](#) – which passed on the Senate floor today – establishes a System of Care Advisory Council that will coordinate the development of services that can be delivered to kids at home and in residential settings.

“Too many Oregon kids and their families are waiting for essential services they need to live safely and happily in the community,” said Sen. Sara Gelser (D-Corvallis), who carried the bill on the Senate floor. “Too often, this lack of access to services pushes kids out of their homes. In the worst cases, kids are forced out of the state altogether. This significant investment of money and expertise is essential to streamlining our fragmented system of care. This will prevent kids from entering foster care and residential care, and will help us in our effort to bring all Oregon kids back to Oregon.”

The 25-member council is directed to develop and maintain a state system of care strategy that integrates public health, child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health and disability services statewide. The council will focus on inclusive services that serve kids before a crisis hits, in the least restrictive environment possible, and that are available to children regardless of where they live in the state.

Senate Bill 1 is the product of the Children and Youth with Specialized Needs work group that was formed in 2018 by the Governor, Senate President and Chief Justice of the Oregon Supreme Court. The work group was charged with addressing unique challenges faced by children with distinctive mental or behavioral health needs who come to the attention of different systems. It now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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