



OREGON JUSTICE RESOURCE CENTER RESPONSE TO NEW REPORT ON CONDITIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS IN THE MULTNOMAH COUNTY DETENTION CENTER

PORTLAND, Ore. – “The findings of this new report from Disability Rights Oregon are nothing short of horrifying. They are further proof that using incarceration as a response to mental illness not only doesn’t work but is actively harming some of our county’s most vulnerable people.

It’s also important to remember that this is not the only serious failing revealed in Multnomah County’s law enforcement and justice system in the last year. From the findings of racial and ethnic disparities at all stages in our justice system, to the revelations about the use of force at the jail, to the excessive force used against protestors, it’s clear we have a major problem.

We need to stop criminalizing mental illness and greatly improve the support available for people in custody who have mental health concerns. We should not be using solitary confinement for people who are seriously mentally ill. Finally, we need to provide appropriate training, staffing and resources to ensure there’s a rapid and lasting improvement in conditions experienced by people housed at the Multnomah County Detention Center.”

Statement to be attributed to Bobbin Singh, Executive Director of the Oregon Justice Resource Center.

For more information or interviews, please contact OJRC’s Director of Communication, Alice Lundell, at alice@ojrc.org or 503-563-3356 (office) or 503-781-1405 (cell).