

OSH members deliver message and gain a voice

Spurred by a series of Oregonian investigative articles, the legislature talked a lot about improvements to Oregon State Hospital (OSH).

The result: funding of Phase 1 of a Master Plan study. SEIU members argued for and won a seat on the planning committee.

The study concluded that:

- ▲ significant structural problems require a new hospital
- ▲ we need additional community placement options
- ▲ the hospital is dramatically under funded
- ▲ the state needs to reconfigure the entire mental health system

Under Senator Peter Courtney's leadership the legislature passed a mental health parity bill which seeks to ensure that Oregonians have access to preventive mental health treatment.

Representative Billy Dalto brought SEIU members to many hearings to testify about the work and patient care conditions. However, Dalto was part of the group voting to create new tax loopholes for corporations – funds that could have been invested in the Hospital.

The legislature did not vote to add real money to the construction of a new hospital. SEIU members delivered a message that community-based treatment can improve quality and continuity of care, but shouldn't be used as a tool to lower pay and working standards.

Some of the members from Oregon State Hospital who spoke to legislators at Lobby Days and hearings:

Lew Cronenberg
Randy Davis
Rob Lundblad
Jackie Pierce
Dan Smith
Jim Walker