

November 19, 2019

**National Alliance on Mental Illness
Southern Oregon (NAMI SO) Position
Regarding Jackson County New Jail Proposal**

My name is Caren Caldwell. I live in Ashland. I am a member of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, aka NAMI.

Along with a modern jail facility, the population of our county needs a 24/7 mental health crisis center. We also need an expanded mobile crisis team. Both of these programs are used elsewhere in the state and are far less expensive than jail. They serve effectively as alternatives to arresting people simply because they are exhibiting symptoms of mental illness.

I am asking this Council to please vote on the resolution to join the jail service district only after you have a commitment from the County Commission to fund these services. You have time to postpone tonight's vote. The County Commission won't vote on the jail until Feb. 5.

Members of Southern Oregon NAMI have participated in every public meeting the Sheriff has held since you voted against the new jail in May. Many times we have asked for some information, some guarantee, some assurance that mental health services will actually be provided in a bigger jail. We have received no such commitment or documentation.

That's why NAMI is holding out for some specific evidence that we can count on this County to provide those services within the county budget. We need evidence that funding will be provided for diversion and recovery services as well as in-jail services. The Sheriff cannot provide that evidence because he only administers the jail budget. The evidence must come in the form of decisions by the County Commissioners who hold the purse strings.

We are urging you to use your influence well. If you vote yes tonight on the resolution, you lose your edge to make a difference. Please wait until you have a commitment for human services funding from the County.