

### NAMI Oregon Supports SB 138

**Challenge:** Finding appropriate pathways to effective treatment and supports for mental health disorders in Oregon is difficult in the best of circumstance. A contributing factor to this problem is the lack of clear standards of care, which leads to a high degree of regional variation in terms of access to care and quality of care.

**Solution:** In 2017, the Legislature created the Mental Health Clinical Advisory Group with the mission of creating treatment algorithms that would help standardize treatment decisions and improve access to effective therapies and supports. The Advisory Group is composed of clinicians and other stakeholders with specific expertise in mental health treatments and medications. The group started its work in early 2018.

➔ **The Mental Health Clinical Advisory Group has proven effective. The results are encouraging enough that NAMI Oregon and the Oregon Health Authority joined together to advocate that the Advisory Group be reauthorized to continue its work.**

NAMI Oregon supports SB 138 because the bill:

- **Focuses on improved prescribing practices coupled with other psychosocial therapies and supports.** The treatment algorithms under development will give Oregon the tools it needs to combine therapies, leading to more comprehensive and informed treatment decisions. Too often, treatment decisions start and stop at prescribing medications and ignore proven therapies that must be used in tandem with medications.
- **Aims Oregon toward true integration and standardization.** SB 138 formally connects the Mental Health Clinical Advisory Group to the Oregon Psychiatric Access Line, which is an OHSU-led consultation service available to primary care clinicians across Oregon. Through OPAL, the Advisory Group's work will lead to more informed treatment decisions at the primary care level, where individuals and families often start when seeking help for mental health conditions.
- **Protects medication access:** SB 138 continues Oregon's long tradition of access to critical mental health medications based on a patient's needs and individual circumstances, increasing the odds that patients will respond to treatment without have to "fail first" on other medications.

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