

Legislative Fiscal Office

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Joint Committee on Ways and Means

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To: Human Services Subcommittee

From: Tom MacDonald, Legislative Fiscal Office

Date: June 17, 2021

Subject: HB 2949 – Relating to mental health
Work Session Recommendations

HB 2949 establishes incentive programs to increase the capacity and diversity of Oregon's behavioral health workforce. The incentives outlined in the bill focus on increasing the number of providers who are people of color, tribal members, or residents of rural communities; increasing access to services for rural and underserved communities; and providing student loan forgiveness or repayment subsidies for qualified mental health care providers who commit to two consecutive years of full-time practice. The bill establishes the Behavioral Health Incentive Subaccount within the existing Health Care Provider Incentive Fund for funds appropriated to or otherwise made available for the subaccount to support the incentive programs.

The bill also creates a program for OHA to award grants to specific types of behavioral health professionals to provide supervised clinical experience to associates or other individuals in order for them to obtain a license to practice in their fields. The funding available in the bill for this program is not deposited into the new Behavioral Health Incentive Subaccount.

With the -A28 amendment, the measure includes \$60 million for the incentive programs and \$20 million for the new grant program. This funding is available to Oregon on a one-time basis from the American Rescue Plan Act. The amendment also does the following:

- Removes a requirement for OHA to provide funding for the reintegration of incarcerated adults into the community.
- Removes a requirement for OHA to provide grants for mental health care in communities who have faced a disproportionate impact to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Adds language requiring OHA to coordinate with the Higher Education Coordinating Commission in considering the workforce investments established under the bill.
- Requires OHA to align the workforce investments with other state investments intended to improve behavioral health outcomes.

Recommended Changes

The Legislative Fiscal Office (LFO) recommends approval of the -A28 amendment.

Final Subcommittee Action

LFO recommends that HB 2949 be amended by the -A28 amendment and be moved to the Ways and Means Full Committee, as amended.

Carriers

Full Committee: _____

House Floor: _____

Senate Floor: _____