

HB 2424 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Human Services

Action Date: 03/31/21

Action: Do pass with amendments and be referred to Ways and Means by prior reference.
(Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 7-0-0-0

Yeas: 7 - Leif, Noble, Owens, Ruiz, Sanchez, Schouten, Williams

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: Iva Sokolovska, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 3/1, 3/3, 3/31

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs the Department of Humans Services (DHS) to establish a child-caring agency grant and training program in consultation with the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). Establishes parameters and allows DHS to contract with a nonprofit organization for program administration, with biannual reports to DHS. Establishes the Child Welfare Cultural Equity Program at DHS to improve access to diverse child welfare providers. Establishes a qualified mental health associate incentive program in OHA to subsidize loan repayment for qualifying providers. Sets forth eligibility criteria and terms of participation. Permits child-caring agencies to allow persons to serve as qualified mental health associates if certain criteria are met. Appropriates \$1,250,000 to DHS for child-caring agency grant and training program and \$2,500,000 for the Child Welfare Cultural Equity Program. Appropriates \$250,000 to OHA for deposit in the Health Care Provider Incentive Fund and \$250,000 to OHA for qualified mental health associates designated to assist child-caring agencies.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Provisions of measure
- Existing processes to handle concerns about substandard care

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Deletes definitions of abuse that are and are not a result of substandard care for purposes of required finding by DHS that a report is either substantiated or unsubstantiated.

BACKGROUND:

Adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years). The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention reports that ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse in adulthood. ACEs can also negatively impact education and job opportunities, and increase risks of injury, sexually transmitted infections, maternal and child health problems, teen pregnancy, involvement in sex trafficking, and a wide range of chronic diseases and leading causes of death such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and suicide. According to a 2019 Mental Health of America report, Oregon ranks the last out of 51 states and territories with respect to access to behavioral health care for youth, and suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth aged 10-24. Youth of color are typically affected up to four times more adversely than their white peers in nearly all indicators of adverse childhood experiences.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend creating and sustaining safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for children and families, to intervene and lessen the immediate and long-term harmful effects of ACEs. Intervention is possible through social service agencies, child, youth, and family services organizations, and recovery services organizations. Social and youth services personnel do not currently qualify

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for student loan forgiveness in Oregon. Social service organizations throughout Oregon report high staff caseloads and inadequate wages and benefits that do not accurately reflect the value of the significant and complex work performed (starting pay is currently \$13 an hour for recent college graduates, with no dental or retirement benefits).

House Bill 2424 A appropriates \$1,250,000 for training, retention and recruitment of a well qualified provider workforce; \$2,500,00 to support the recruitment and retention of staff of color; \$250,000 for student loan forgiveness; and \$250,000 to begin an apprentice program for 25 trainees.