

HB 2949 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Behavioral Health

Action Date: 04/12/21

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

Vote: 9-0-0-0

Yeas: 9 - Lively, Moore-Green, Morgan, Nosse, Reynolds, Salinas, Sanchez, Sollman, Wright

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: Revenue impact issued

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Meeting Dates: 3/3, 4/7, 4/12

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Establishes Behavioral Health Incentive Subaccount. Directs Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to provide incentives to increase recruitment and retention of behavioral health providers with associate, bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degrees, or other credentials who are people of color, tribal members, or residents of rural areas in the state. Appropriates \$110 million to the Behavioral Health Incentive Subaccount to fund these incentives. Directs OHA provide funding to counties, community mental health programs, and organizations to provide new or increase existing transition services for individuals reintegrating into community following incarceration. Appropriates \$20 million in General Fund money to OHA for this purpose. Directs OHA to establish program to provide grants to licensed behavioral health workers to provide supervised clinical experience to associates or other individuals requiring supervised clinical experience to obtain licensure. Appropriates \$20 million in General Fund money to OHA for this purpose. Requires public or private entity employing mental health providers who supervise associates, interns, or other individuals seeking licensure pay all costs incurred by supervisor. Establishes program to provide funding to community mental health to ensure access to individuals in underserved communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 pandemic. Directs OHA to administer program. Appropriates \$50 million in General Fund money for program. Changes mental health interns to mental health associates. Declares emergency, effective July 1, 2021.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Demographics of behavioral health providers in Oregon
- Importance of culturally appropriate services
- Barriers to gaining behavioral health licensure

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Replaces the measure.

BACKGROUND:

The Farley Report (2019) assessed the behavioral health workforce in Oregon and found that minority populations are underrepresented in all segments of the behavioral health workforce when compared with the racial and ethnic demographics of Oregon's population. The report also found that unlicensed providers are the most racially and ethnically diverse segment of the workforce as compared to licensed providers and licensed prescribers.

More recently, a 2021 workforce report from OHA showed that people of color comprise 13 percent of the licensed behavioral health provider workforce, and clinical social work associates are the most racially/ethnically diverse with 26 percent being people of color.

House Bill 2949 A establishes grants and other programs to diversify Oregon's behavioral health workforce.