

**KHANH PHAM**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
DISTRICT 46



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Testimony in Support of HB 2949**

March 3, 2021

Chair Sanchez, Vice Chairs Nosse and Moore Green, and members of the committee,

**My name is Khanh Pham, State Representative for HD 46. As a sponsor I am honored to testify in support of HB 2949 Mental Health Workforce Expansion alongside my representatives in the BIPOC Caucus.**

**Since the start of the pandemic, my constituents have reported an increase in stress levels and mental health issues stemming from the social isolation, unemployment, economic stresses and increased family responsibilities caused by the pandemic. The pandemic has highlighted how inadequate access to mental health is to those who need it the most and how understaffed the mental health profession is.**

In addition, my district has one of the highest concentrations of Asian and Pacific Islanders in the state, and recently we have seen nationwide and in our state an increase in vandalism of Asian owned-businesses and reports of anti-Asian and anti-Muslim slurs and physical attacks against members of our community.

These attacks lead to increased stress and fear in many marginalized communities, and ensuring access to mental health services is a key step to ensuring our communities are healthy and feeling safe.

This bill sports pathways to ensure that BIPOC communities have access to culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate care by BIPOC mental, behavioral, physical, and telehealth providers. We need to expand opportunities for BIPOC students to enter the mental health profession because with their life experiences, they're often better equipped to serve and support the increasingly diverse patients of Oregon.

This bill offers proactive strategies to help ensure every Oregonian, especially those from our most underserved communities, has adequate access to mental health services, and I urge the committee to join me in supporting HB 2949. Thank you.