



# WASHINGTON COUNTY OREGON

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April 5, 2021

TO: House Committee on Behavioral Health

RE: Support for HB 2949

Dear Chair Sanchez, Vice-Chairs Moore-Green and Nosse, and Committee Members:

This testimony is on behalf of the Washington County Health and Human Services Behavioral Health Division. At Washington County, we know behavioral health needs can have a far-reaching impact on both those living with the needs, and the people close to them. Most mental health and addictions treatment services in Washington County are provided by a network of contracted community providers. County staff provide civil commitment investigations, protective services, care coordination, system management and safety net supports. We are committed to our clients, quality service, relationships, and hope.

We continue to be humbled and grateful for the Oregon Legislature's continued emphasis on funding our state's behavioral health systems and particularly for strengthening our workforce. According to the 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 80% of individuals with a substance use disorder (SUD) do not get needed care, 57% of those with mental illness also do not get needed care, and fully one-third of those living with serious mental illness do not get the care they need.<sup>1</sup> Of note, the Survey found that a major factor in achieving this goal is addressing the training and education needs of practitioners.

The sponsors of HB 2949 have diligently worked with county mental health subject matter experts on amendments including to increase the costs allocated to supervision, and we are enthusiastic about the direction the bill has headed. If there will be another policy amendment, we would like to encourage you to include community mental health programs (CMHPs) on the Task Force since much of the group's work will include discussions on how CMHPs train and recruit our workforce. We look forward to working with the legislature to prioritize funding in HB 2949 as the bill moves through the Ways and Means process.

Thank you for your consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/behavioral-health-workforce-report.pdf>