



February 11, 2021

Rep. Tawna Sanchez, Chair
House Committee on Behavioral Health
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 2585

Dear House Committee on Behavioral Health,

The Bridges Oregon urges you to support and ensure passage of Oregon House Bill 2585 to “...ensuring culturally and linguistically affirmative mental services for individuals who are Deaf, DeafBlind, or Hard of Hearing.” Established in 2017, the Bridges Oregon became the first and only linguistic and culturally appropriate nonprofit organization in Oregon to provide advocacy and accompaniment services to individuals who are Deaf victims and survivors.

Oregon House Bill 2585 would directly benefit at least 1,058,068 individuals who are living with hearing loss in the state of Oregon and 4,021 of them use sign language to communicate by using the 2017 formula from the National Center for Health Statistics.

The Oregon Community-based Needs Assessment report stated “access to mental health services practitioners who understand the cultural and communication issues involved for all aspects of the Deaf and Hard of hearing communities, and who can communicate directly with those consumers, is at a crisis level. Whether it is for crisis counseling, everyday issues, or a psychiatric disability, Oregon does not have the capacity to serve its Deaf and hard of hearing citizens who need these services” ([Community-Based Needs Assessment of Oregon’s Deaf and Hard of Hearing Communities: Final Report on December 30, 2016](#)).

Should you have any questions regarding the position of the Bridges Oregon on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at chad@bridgesoregon.org or 971.202.1500.

Sincerely Yours,

Chad A. Ludwig, MSW, ADAC, OHCI, DI
Executive Director

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