



OREGON PSYCHIATRIC
PHYSICIANS ASSOCIATION

Date: February 17, 2021

To: The Honorable Chair Tawna Sanchez
The Honorable Vice-Chair Andrea Salinas
The Honorable Vice-Chair Cedric Hayden
Members of the House Behavioral Health Committee

From: Maya Lopez, MD
Daniel Nicoli, DO
Oregon Psychiatric Physicians Association

RE: Position statement on HB 2649, Access to Behavioral Health Care

Chair Sanchez, Vice Chairs and members of the House Behavioral Health Committee:

The Oregon Psychiatric Physicians Association (OPPA), a district branch of the American Psychiatric Association, was established in 1966. OPPA serves as the organization for Oregon's medical doctors specializing in psychiatry who work together to ensure effective treatment for persons with mental illness, including substance use disorders, and compassion for them and their families.

OPPA supports HB 2690, which would require the state medical assistance program to provide up to six behavioral health check-ups every year with a qualified mental health provider regardless of medical necessity or whether the recipient has a behavioral health diagnosis. OPPA supports this and other policies that ensure benefits, coverage, medication and access to substance use disorder treatment. One challenge is that many people when faced with high deductibles and co-pays will either skip or delay care. Lack of preventative care can lead to more acute health care crises that may pose a danger to the patient and others sometimes with tragic consequences. It can also lead to costly hospitalizations or entry into the criminal justice system.

HB 2690 will help reduce barriers to care and decrease the stigma surrounding mental health and substance use disorders. We urge the passage of this bill.

Oregon Psychiatric Physicians Association

PO Box 21571, Keizer OR 97307

info@oregonpsychiatric.org

www.oregonpsychiatric.org