

HB 2235 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Health Care

Prepared By: Maya Green, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 5/3, 5/8

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to convene work group to study major barriers to workforce recruitment and retention in state's publicly financed behavioral health system. Specifies work group membership. Requires work group to develop recommendations related to behavioral health workforce recruitment, retention, administrative burdens, reimbursement, caseloads, and burnout. Specifies needs and impacts work group should consider in developing recommendations. Requires OHA to report to Legislative Assembly on work group's initial recommendations by January 15, 2025, and final recommendations by December 15, 2025. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Has minimal fiscal impact

House vote: Ayes, 35; Nays, 15; Excused, 10.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Provisions of the measure

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

According to [Mental Health America](#), Oregon ranks among the worst states in prevalence of mental illness and access to care and is 49th in the country. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic recession has increased the prevalence of mental illness and substance use disorder, including increasing the number of adults reporting symptoms of anxiety and depressive disorder from one in ten in 2019 to four in ten in 2021. In 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published the [National and State Trends in Anxiety and Depression Severity Scores Among Adults During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) which provides numerical data on the impact of COVID-19 on mental health across the country.

In 2021, the Oregon legislature invested \$1.35 billion in the state's behavioral health system to improve the state's behavioral health crisis system, support the implementation of Measure 110 (2020), increase access to residential treatment, and support behavioral health workforce recruitment and retention. As the need for behavioral health services increases, so too can the caseloads of behavioral health practitioners, which can increase practitioner burnout and negatively impact workforce retention.

House Bill 2235 A requires the Oregon Health Authority to convene a work group to study the major barriers to workforce recruitment and retention in the state's publicly financed behavioral health system.