

## House Bill 3126: Emergency Behavioral Health Services for Children and Adolescents

In most Oregon communities, there is not a standard plan of care when a child presents to the emergency department in a behavioral health crisis. Many times, those in the most acute need are told the only direct access to help is through an emergency department in the Portland-metro area. In order to serve children and families in behavioral health crisis, we need a regional structure that is prepared to respond in an organized way.

**HB 3126 establishes the Emergency Behavioral Health Services for Children Program to promote the timely delivery of behavioral health services to children who present to emergency departments in behavioral health crisis.**

The Emergency Behavioral Health Services for Children Program will establish Regional Child Psychiatric Centers, utilizing existing physical health trauma regions. This will create a structure for hospitals responding to a behavioral health crisis.

- Each region would have a **Regional Child Psychiatric Center** with comprehensive services including access to psychiatry, licensed mental health providers, family/peer support and potentially a Child/ Adolescent Psychiatric Emergency program.
- All other hospitals within each region would have a memorandum of understanding with the Regional Child Psychiatric Center for consultation services.
- Regions would identify their individual response plans based on their existing resources, processes, services and supports, including county gap analyses to identify future funding needs.

House Bill 3126 requires the Oregon Health Authority to establish by rule the criteria for designating hospitals as Regional Child Psychiatric Centers and to pilot the program in three regions.

The bill prohibits insurance policies or certificates from requiring prior authorization of treatment provided to individuals presenting at a Regional Child Psychiatric Center.

### HB 3126 will build stronger connections between hospitals and community-based care providers

By leveraging the existing infrastructure of the physical health trauma system, the Emergency Behavioral Health Services for Children Program will establish a more clear and predictable escalation system and maximize scarce resources. Developing levels of service across regional services areas will keep decision making closer to home and elevate local expertise. And most importantly, will improve the care experience for children and their families.

**We, the following partners, urge you to support HB 3126, which will improve behavioral health crisis care for children and their families.**



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