



ALEX CUYLER

Intergovernmental Relations Manager
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DATE: March 20, 2023
TO: Senate Committee On Health Care
FROM: Alex Cuyler, Lane County Intergovernmental Relations Manager
RE: SB 1044, behavioral health

Dear Chair Patterson and Members of the Committee:

Lane County wishes to express our thoughts on SB 1044, which appropriates monies from the General Fund to the Oregon Health Authority for behavioral health treatment services. Large investments in behavioral health are needed and we appreciate the attention to meeting the increasing demands of our most vulnerable populations. We urge your support for the -2 amendment which will create essential funding for the continuum of community mental health programs and behavioral services.

We would like to emphasize the increase in demand of behavioral health residential bed availability. According to the OHA, 383 residential beds in both adult and children behavioral health systems have been lost since 2021. It is necessary for the entity in charge of managing the beds to be well-connected and effectively coordinating with our community mental health programs (CMHPs). CMHPs are the experts in their communities around their unique behavioral health needs. We strongly urge your support for resources and decision making flowing through CMHPs locally.

Oregon is in need of long term care facilities that will invest in care for individuals experiencing co-occurring disabilities, including substance abuse, mental illness, physical disability, and developmental disability. Lane County is in alignment with the Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs and the recommendations noted in their joint letter with the Oregon Council for Behavioral Health and American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees. The recommendations listed in their letter are necessary to close the gaps that continue to impact our communities and complete the continuum of community behavioral health care.

Behavioral health needs are increasing and becoming more complex. There is an added dynamic that involves the justice involved individual. It is important to establish better support for state-county shared services which have the expertise and knowledge to meet the needs of their communities. SB 1044 invests in behavioral health infrastructure and workforce, and is the foundation to improving a system that many people across the state depend on. We urge your support for SB 1044 with the addition of the -2 amendment.

ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED BY ALEX CUYLER, LANE COUNTY
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS MANAGER