



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

To: Members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

Date: February 5, 2023

Subject: Support HB 4070

Thank you Chair Nosse, Vice Chairs Goodwin and Nelson, and members of the committee.

My name is Dr. Maxine Dexter and I am honored to be the State Representative for House District 33, which includes NW & Downtown Portland, Linnton, and Cathedral Park. I am grateful for this opportunity today to share my strong support for HB 4070 which will expand and strengthen school-based health centers across Oregon.

HB 4070 is my only personal bill this session, and I am grateful for the time today to remind you of what the bill does. HB 4070 will allocate \$7.85 million in mental health and substance use resources to Oregon schools, which are facing a growing health crisis. It also allocates \$10 million in construction grants so schools can more affordably and efficiently build high-quality school-based health centers. It will add 10 new school districts and allow them to begin planning for school-based health centers, which will lead to thousands of additional students benefiting from healthcare support through school-based health centers and school nurses, without drawing from the State School Fund.

This committee previously received an informational hearing on this during Legislative Days on November 8th, and since that time there have been a few minor adjustments to the policy. HB 4070 had an original draft fiscal of \$5.8 million. I have raised the fiscal to \$7.85 million. This change was made to better address the mental health and substance use treatment needs facing young Oregonians. I added language to specifically call out that these funds can be used for substance use prevention, screening, referral, and treatment services, as this is a growing need in our schools across the state. I have also raised the amount of planning grant funds from \$1.1 million to \$1.4 million to adjust for inflation.

Some of you may have heard me discuss Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, a framework for understanding human behavior first described by Abraham Maslow in 1943, explaining how humans are motivated to fulfill basic needs before moving on to more advanced needs. This framework for understanding human behavior reinforces what we see in schools - students who are houseless or hungry are less able to learn¹. These students are also less able to pursue access to healthcare². School-based health centers facilitate a stronger sense of support and

¹ <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.3102/0013189X221091232>

² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5750953/>

community in our schools while offering healthcare and public health education and interventions. With the utilization of existing school infrastructure, we can truly meet the needs of our youth where they already are to help address their social and health needs. Additionally, by providing students and families with healthcare and social services in a culturally competent and trusted building, school-based health centers efficiently close many gaps in our social infrastructure.

HB 4070 is a good investment. School based health centers reduce barriers such as cost, accessibility, transportation, and language that keep students and families from seeking the health services they need. They incentivize school districts, education service districts, health and community partners to collaborate to implement a trauma-informed, community-centered health model, based on the unique needs of each community. I am proud that the funding provided by HB 4070 will allow school districts across the state to implement community-informed service hubs, driven by the needs of families and students for community wraparound services, and will allow the communities to implement school-based health centers, or a school nurse model, depending on the needs of a specific community.

This bill balances the need to provide an immediate response to Oregon's youth behavioral health crisis while also developing infrastructure to meet future needs. That is why we have been able to have a broad coalition of organizers who are supporting, and was introduced with bi-partisan support. At this time, I am unaware of any opposition to this bill.

I am grateful for the work of Senator Sollman on this bill in the 2023 session (SB 549) and getting us to this point today. I hope that you will strongly support this getting across the finish line in 2024 as our students and families are in crisis and this bill will offer meaningful relief.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maxine Dexter', written in a cursive style.

Representative Maxine Dexter, M.D.

House District 33 (Northwest and Downtown Portland, Linnton, and Cathedral Park)