



ASSOCIATION OF OREGON  
COMMUNITY MENTAL  
HEALTH PROGRAMS

To: Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Goodwin and Nelson and members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care  
From: Annette Marcus, MSW, Suicide Prevention Policy Manager  
Re: Support for HB4070 – School Based Health Centers  
Date: Feb. 4, 2024

I am writing on behalf of the Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide (Alliance) to express our strong support for HB4070 as a key mental health promotion and suicide prevention strategy. The U.S. Surgeon General’s urgent advisory [Protecting Youth Mental Health](#) notes that “supporting the mental health of children and youth will require a whole-of-society effort” that should include recognizing that mental health is an essential part of overall health. School Based Health Centers play a critical role in expanding access to quality care and creating “positive, safe and affirming” environments for students.



**The Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide is a statewide advisory group to the Oregon Health Authority. We are subject matter experts, state leaders, young adults, and suicide attempt and loss survivors from around the state. We work closely with local suicide prevention coalitions across the state. The role of the Alliance is to advise OHA on all matters related to youth and young adult suicide.**

HB 4070 provides evidence-based resources that will be quickly available for schools to support youth mental and physical health. A study conducted in Oregon found that youth are 10-21x more likely to seek mental health support at a school-based health center (SBHC) and that SBHCs with increased mental health capacity were 12% less likely to report a depressive episode; 16% less likely to report suicidal ideation; and **18% less likely to report a suicide attempt.**

Suicide is preventable. We know with coordinated, cross-sector efforts, such as School Based Health Centers, we *can help reduce obstacles, provide lifesaving education* and connect students with needed resources. **By passing HB4070, we will be adding another protection for Oregon students experiencing a crisis, and may save lives by ensuring that the right help is available at the right time.**

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