

Submitter: Mary Hennrich

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB4070

Testimony to House Behavioral Health and Healthcare Committee

Chair: Rep. Rob Nosse

Vice Chairs: Travis Nelson, RN and Christine Goodwin

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By: Mary Lou Hennrich

Mary Lou Hennrich, 7206 SE Salmon St., Portland, OR 97215

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Nelson and Goodwin and Members of the Committee—

My name is Mary Lou Hennrich and I live at 7206 SE Salmon, Portland.

I am a retired Public Health Nurse and Multnomah County Health Department Deputy Director who happens to have had the privilege of starting the first School based health center at Portland's Roosevelt High School in Feb. 1986, along-side Dr. Matthew Prophet who was then PPS Superintendent of Schools. Without his leadership and unwavering support, we might not be here today, supporting these clinics that are now across the state of Oregon.

The original model has not really changed over the nearly 40 years of their service to students and their families—bringing “on-site” physical and mental/behavioral preventive and treatment services where students are! At Multnomah County Health Department we had for many years tried to get needed healthcare services to teens, but without much success. Even when we set up special locations near schools or neighborhoods where they lived, they didn't come!

That's when Billi Odegaard, Health Dept. Director heard about the first “School based Teen Health Center” in St. Paul Minnesota and asked me to “check it out.” This clinic offered comprehensive health care to students at Mechanics Arts High School, including a full range of reproductive health services to their students and it was at near capacity from its opening day.

The model is based on an interdisciplinary team of nurses, nurse practitioners, behavioral health specialists and community health workers—all working closely together to meet the side array of student health needs. Some also offer services to siblings and parents during off school hours. Local school districts and communities are partners in assuring the needed primary-care services and referral networks for

specialty care to meet physical and mental health needs.

As you know, all healthcare organizations are having difficulty with not only increasing costs of staff and supplies, they are facing many challenges recruiting both professional and paraprofessional staff—especially behavioral health that is having record needs and demand.

This is where HB 4070 comes in with its specific needs/asks.

- Planning grant opportunities for local communities to implement a school-based health center or school nurse model according to their priority needs (\$1.4M)
- Inflationary increase of 10% to the school-based health center base rate, and tied to inflation moving forward. (\$936,000)
- Increase the school-based mental health fund to provide additional mental health and substance use services in schools either directly or through SBHCs. (\$7.85 million)
- Bonding for school-based health center capital construction including pre-built modular clinics to go on school campuses. (\$10 million)

Please imagine “not me” sitting here, but thousands of students who are counting on your support!

Thanks for all your dedication and hard work, balancing many important priorities for all Oregonians. Your work is so valued.

Mary Lou Hennrich
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