



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

PUBLIC SERVICES BUILDING

2051 KAEN ROAD | OREGON CITY, OR 97045

Chair Rob Nosse and Committee Members
House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

February 8, 2024

Dear Chair Nosse and Members of the Committee:

We are writing as individual County Commissioners in support of HB 4139, which would reduce barriers to bringing new behavioral health and substance abuse facilities to Oregon.

We can all agree that our communities are facing an immediate crisis. Even beyond downtown Portland, Oregonians are struggling with addiction and severe and persistent mental health issues. Frequently, those are in combination with homelessness, which brings open-air drug use, threats and acts of violence, thefts and break-ins at local businesses, and other problems.

HB 4139 presents a unique opportunity to cut red tape and encourage private and non-profit investment in our behavioral healthcare system by removing the requirement for a certificate of need for certain types of facilities. Healthcare facilities would still have to follow other state and federal standards and accreditation, ensuring that Oregonians would receive quality care.

In the past several years, the Legislature has committed over \$1 billion to behavioral health and substance abuse treatment. Conversations during this Legislative session regarding Measure 110 are poised to continue the effort to reign in drug use and connect people with needed services. Yet we have been slow to expand access to treatment, a large reason why we are still seeing a crisis on our streets. HB 4139 will help increase access to inpatient and outpatient behavioral health and substance abuse care so Oregonians can get the medical treatment they need and deserve.

Sincerely,

Tootie Smith, Chair

Commissioner Ben West