



**Testimony in support of HB 4050 – Increase Oregon employers’  
competitiveness in recruiting and retaining workforce**

February 12, 2024

Dear Chair Holvey, Vice Chairs Elmer and Sosa, Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP), representing CMHPs statewide who manage and provide behavioral health services for their communities, I would like to express our strong support for HB 4050 which will make it more possible to recruit and retain workforce in the public behavioral health system by offering pay differentials and hiring/retention bonuses.

Clinicians working in community mental health programs and other public behavioral health agencies receive lower pay for harder work, while working weekend and evening shifts and serving higher acuity clients. Many workers leave for higher pay and an easier workload elsewhere, away from crisis response, forensic services and intensive case management. We urgently need to fill the workforce gap as we stand up facilities and community-based behavioral health programs so that we have the workforce needed to provide the necessary program and residential services.

Please support HB 4050 to allow public and private behavioral health agencies to provide the incentives and differential pay for workers we desperately need to do the challenging work in our public behavioral health system.

Sincerely,

Cherryl L. Ramirez  
Executive Director, AOCMHP