



February 13, 2024

TO: Chair Nosse, members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health & Health Care

FROM: Association of Oregon Counties Legislative Affairs Manager, Jessica Pratt

RE: Support HB 4071

Dear Chair Nosse and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Association of Oregon Counties, representing Oregon's county governments, I am writing to urge your support for HB 4071, to attract and grow new behavioral health and public health professionals in communities across Oregon by modernizing our professional licensing board processes.

Oregon counties are experiencing high vacancy rates for critical public health and behavioral health professionals across the local continuum of care. Some positions have been open for years, particularly in rural communities, at a time when Oregon is investing in new brick and mortar treatment spaces that will require new staff to operate them. This problem is compounded by prohibitively long wait times for applicants to receive responses from several of Oregon's professional licensing boards.

HB 4071 or HB 4071-1 will uncover the reasons behind these excessive wait times so we can resolve them and bring desperately needed new public health and behavioral health professionals into Oregon communities. This bill is an important piece of a multi-pronged strategy to attract and grow the local public and behavioral health workforce.

AOC urges your support for HB 4071, commend to you the -2 and -3 amendments, and we thank you for your support for state-county shared services.

Jessica Pratt
Legislative Affairs Manager
Association of Oregon Counties