

SB 527 -2 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 3/13, 3/25, 4/3

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure directs the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to create a grant program to fund pilot programs that create opportunities for high school students to receive training to enter the behavioral health workforce and allocates \$3,500,000 to OHA from the General Fund for the 2025-2027 biennium for grant awards.

Detailed Summary:

Directs local workforce development boards to establish partnerships to administer the pilot programs. Permits grants to be used for facilitating or sponsoring a pilot program, for providing scholarships to students in a pilot program, or for wraparound supports for students in a pilot program. Directs OHA to develop an application for grants under the program. Directs OHA to require annual reports from grant recipients. Sunsets January 2, 2029. Declares an emergency, effective on passage.

Fiscal impact: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue impact: No revenue impact

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-2 Replaces Section 1 of the measure.

- Directs the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to award grants to local workforce development boards to establish and implement behavioral health workforce training programs throughout the state.
- Requires grant programs to be designed based on evidence from existing, successful behavioral health workforce training models.
- Directs grant recipients to provide culturally and linguistically specific training opportunities to high school students from underserved communities.
- Includes the nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon as possible grant recipients.
- Allows grant funds to pay for sponsored internships.
- Directs OHA to consider recommendations from a statewide organization that represents all workforce development boards when determining the amount of a grant award.

BACKGROUND:

The [Behavioral Health Workforce Report](#) (2022) found that Oregon has the fourth-highest rate of unmet behavioral health need in the country. The report identified strategies for growing the behavioral health workforce in Oregon, including creating robust recruitment and training pathways and the expansion of tuition reimbursement and loan repayment programs.

The [Behavioral Health and Human Services](#) program through the Career Technical Education Center in Salem, launched in fall 2023, is designed to equip high school students with skills and knowledge to support individuals and communities in achieving optimal mental and emotional health. The program is designed to prepare students to join the behavioral health workforce.

Senate Bill 527 directs the Oregon Health Authority to create a grant program to fund opportunities for high school students to receive training to enter the behavioral health workforce and allocates \$3,500,000 from the General Fund for the 2025-2027 biennium to fund the program.

PRELIMINARY