

SB 527 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health

Action Date: 04/03/25

Action: Do pass with amendments. Refer to Ways and Means by prior reference. (Printed A-Eng).

Vote: 4-1-0-0

Yeas: 4 - Anderson, Gorsek, Patterson, Reynolds

Nays: 1 - Linthicum

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: Katie Hart, LPRO Analyst

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 programs through local workforce development boards for students to receive training to enter the behavioral health workforce. It appropriates \$3,500,000 to OHA from the General Fund for the 2025-2027 biennium for grant awards.

Detailed Summary:

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 education service districts, coordinated care organizations, local public health organizations, local school districts, and the nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon as possible grant recipients.
- Allows grants to fund program development and facilitation, scholarships, wraparounds support for students, and data collection.
- Directs OHA to consider recommendations from a statewide organization that represents all workforce development boards when determining the amount of a grant award.
- Requires grant recipients to report on program progress to OHA annually.

Directs the statewide organization that represents all workforce development boards to provide grant award recommendations to OHA no later than 30 days after the effective date of the measure. Appropriates \$3,500,000 to OHA from the General Fund for the 2025-2027 biennium for grant awards. Sunsets January 2, 2029. Declares an emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Behavioral health workforce development.
- Statewide workforce needs.
- Impact of the training program.

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Replaces Section 1 and 2 of the measure. Updates section numbers.

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

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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 A directs the Oregon Health Authority to create a grant program to fund opportunities for 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.