

Submitter: Catherine Gidley
On Behalf Of: Oregon School Based Health Alliance
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2729

Chair Neron and Members of the Committee:

My name is Cathy Gidley. I am a Board Member for the Oregon School Based Health Alliance. I am writing in support of HB 2729, which provides critical resources that youth and families across Oregon need NOW. Oregon is ranked 49th in the nation for youth mental health, and it's showing in our schools through rampant behavior issues and high rates of chronic absenteeism. HB 2729 provides evidence-based resources that will be quickly available for schools to support youth mental and physical health. A study conducted in Oregon found that youth are 10-21x more likely to seek mental health support at a school-based health center (SBHC) and that SBHC's that increased mental health capacity were 12% less likely to report a depressive episode; 16% less likely to report suicidal ideation; and 18% less likely to report a suicide attempt. .

I support this bill because of the devastating cuts we have seen to services for marginalized communities. These cuts especially hurt our youth and why our school health resources are so critical in our community. School based health centers not only benefit students, but they also benefit faculty and the community at large. Our youth need this now and these resources will allow for an immediate increase in our capacity to support them. I urge you, and thank you in advance, for your yes vote on HB 2729.

Thank you,

Catherine A. Gidley