

2025 Legislative Agenda

Strengthening Oregon's Public Behavioral Health System

All Oregonians deserve access to a well-coordinated, adequately-resourced behavioral health system. Timely mental health and substance use treatment helps keep individuals safe, stable, and healthy while reducing the need for higher levels of care, criminal justice involvement, or even losing their lives.

Community Mental Health Programs (CMHPs) deliver vital services in all 36 Oregon counties, regardless of insurance status, including mobile crisis services. While challenges persist, the legislature can make significant progress in 2025 by addressing key priorities to expand services and strengthen care.

HB 2024 - Strengthening Oregon's Behavioral Health Workforce

The critical investments that the Legislature recently made will not be successful or increase access unless they are accompanied by significant efforts to recruit and retain our behavioral health workforce. A recent survey of CMHPs statewide revealed a 17% vacancy rate of positions overall and this number jumps to a staggering 29% for crisis service workers. This session, we can increase workforce recruitment and retention through proven strategies by passing HB 2024. The bill will accomplish this by:

- Incentivizing work in the public system: In alignment with the Governor's Recommended Budget, the bill allocates \$20M for a workforce incentive grant program at the Oregon Health Authority so that providers can offer employees access to things like housing stipends, tuition assistance and child care. The bill also allocates \$5M to the United We Heal Labor Trust for participating providers to offer wage increases and workforce incentives while leveraging federal matching funds.
- Increasing provider rates for those serving individuals with the most acute need: Right now in our system, workers providing care for people with the most complex needs are paid the least. Providers are

often drawn away from community mental health to private practice where they can make more money and work fewer hours. Increasing rates for workers who provide services like crisis response, street outreach, medication-assisted treatment, and case management is key to retaining these workers in the public behavioral health system. HB 2024 provides a targeted rate increase for these providers so workers are able to stay where communities need them most.



HB 2202 & HB 2056 - Streamlining and Adequately Resourcing Oregon's Behavioral Health System

HB 2202: Reducing Admin Burden

In 2024, the legislature passed HB 4092 that created a workgroup to eliminate unnecessary administrative complexity within the behavioral health system. AOCMHP participated in this workgroup and we are supportive of the recommendations in HB 2202 to:

- Update and standardize language
- Clarify and streamline committees and advisory bodies
- Consolidate and align consumer rights sections
- Apply funding-dependent terms consistently throughout ORS 430 and 414

For more information, please contact [Laura Curtis](#), 541.280.9984
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HB 2056: Resourcing Community Providers

CMHPs play a crucial role in providing services and coordinating care for individuals who are unable to 'aid and assist' in their own defense, are involved in the civil commitment process, or experience a behavioral health crisis. In addition to the workgroup created above, HB 4092 (2024) required OHA to complete a cost study on the full array of services required to be provided by CMHPs by December 2025 and these three services named above by December 2024.

The first cost study revealed that the gap between the costs to provide these services and funding currently received (excluding temporary one-time funding) is \$32.4M/year, \$64.8M/biennium.

Current funding is not enough to meet the need and because Aid & Assist and Civil Commitment services are not eligible for Medicaid reimbursement, it is critical that state general funds adequately cover this funding gap.

HB 2056 allocates an additional \$64.8M to the Oregon Health Authority for Community Mental Health Programs to provide these necessary services and better meet their communities' needs.

Building on Progress: Continuing funding for Jail Diversion Programs consistent with the Governor's Budget Recommendation

In 2024, the legislature allocated additional one-time resources for CMHPs to provide jail diversion services to individuals in their communities.

These services include:

- Connecting people with treatment, supports, and peer recovery mentors sooner and providing outreach and engagement services to those who have not been interested in treatment prior to justice involvement
- Urgent and crisis care to prevent incarceration or Oregon State Hospital admission
- System navigation and housing assistance, and
- Intensive case management and peer support - services that have proven to reduce recidivism by 60%

In order to continue providing these services to those in need, AOCMHP is requesting the legislature support the Governor's recommendation for a \$16.5M allocation to Community Mental Health Programs for this purpose.

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