

SB 729

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Senate Bill 1557, which passed the legislature last year was paramount in showcasing the unmet needs of children and youth experiencing severe emotional disturbances. Within that, was the requirement that certain organizations and agencies may not deny children and youth with mental health services on the basis they have an intellectual or developmental disability (I/DD).

Senate Bill 729 is an important addition as it expands the population to all individuals who have intellectual or developmental disabilities. Children, youth, and adults with I/DD all deserve access to mental health treatment. For far too long, individuals have been turned away from treatment due to being “too difficult” to treat. **Over 40% of individuals with I/DD have cooccurring mental health conditions, this statistic grows to 70% when looking at the autistic population alone (Healthy Minds Policy Initiative, 2024).**

Oregon ranks fourth in the nation for its unhoused population, with 40 percent reporting serious mental health disorders and 37 percent reporting substance abuse disorders (Portland Street Medicine, n.d.; Zielinski, 2023). And yet, Oregon is turning away a large population of individuals from treatment.

Senate Bill 729 is a required addition to ensure that every Oregonian has access to mental health services and won't be turned away on the basis of intellectual or developmental disability.

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References:

- Healthy Minds Policy Initiative.** (2024, July 17). *Improving access to behavioral health care for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities*. Healthy Minds Policy Initiative. Retrieved February 10, 2025 from <https://www.healthymindspolicy.org/research/improving-access-to-behavioral-health-care-for-people-with-intellectual-and-developmental-disabilities>
- Portland Street Medicine.** (n.d.). *The Problem*. Retrieved February 10, 2025, from <https://www.portlandstreetmedicine.org/the-problem>