Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of SB 729. I am the I/DD System Policy Manager for the Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP). The Community Developmental Disability Programs (CDDPs), which provide case management services to individuals who experience an Intellectual or Developmental Disability (I/DD) in all 36 counties of Oregon, are members of the Association.

Case managers who serve individuals with I/DD are a lifeline. They protect the health and safety of everyone on their caseload and ensure that those individuals receive the services they need. Whether it be finding a job, housing, or transportation, a case manager will always be there when called upon. The case manager is also who will most often be called when an individual needs healthcare, mental or behavioral health, or emergency services.

With this being one of our programs' primary responsibilities, we advocate strongly for those we serve to receive the assistance they need. While Oregon has made important strides in reducing barriers for individuals who experience an I/DD to access mental health services, some of those we serve have unfortunately still faced barriers in securing such critical support.

In 2023, Oregon took an important step forward by passing SB 1557. This legislation ensured that individuals under the age of 18 who experience an I/DD would be able to access the mental health services that they may need. But we know that many adults in Oregon who experience an I/DD also need mental and behavioral health support.

SB 729 would expand the protections that the state established two years ago to adults, reducing barriers to them receiving access to critical mental and behavioral health services.

All Oregonians deserve access to the supports and services that they may need - this bill will help give it to them.

We urge your support of SB 729.

Sincerely,

Dawn-Alisa Sadler
I/DD Policy Manager - AOCMHP

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