



February 11, 2025

To: Chair Gelser-Blouin, Senate Committee on Human Services

From: Em Braman, Executive Director, The Arc Oregon

RE: Support for Senate Bill 729

Chair Gelser-Blouin and Committee Members,

On behalf of The Arc Oregon, I am writing to express our **support for SB 729**. For over **70 years**, The Arc Oregon has provided advocacy, support, and services to people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. We envision a world in which all persons have the support and opportunities they need for personal development and independence, interdependence with family and friends, and inclusion in the community.

SB 729 solidifies access to mental health support and treatment for children, youth and adults with IDD in Oregon, per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Olmstead Decision. Research shows that people with IDD experience mental health conditions at a rate two to three times higher than the general population. (1) Everyone should have access to the support and services needed to maintain their mental health. Through our work supporting adults with IDD, we frequently have to fight for individuals with IDD to access the mental health services they need. Organizations often tell us they do not have a provider with any training to support someone with IDD, so they turn the person with IDD away. This is discrimination based on disability; this is not acceptable.

The simple changes proposed by this bill will ensure people with IDD, just like all people, have access to covered mental health services to meet their health needs. These changes bring Oregon in line with the ADA, ensuring people with IDD do not face discrimination when seeking mental health services. Please support SB 729 to ensure mental health care access for Oregonians with IDD.

1. Hogg Foundation for Mental Health: University of Texas at Austin. Policy recommendation: Addressing the Mental Health and Wellness of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (IDD) August 1, 2014