



February 18, 2025

TO: Chair Nosse, members of the House Committee On Behavioral Health & Health Care

FROM: Association of Oregon Counties Legislative Affairs Manager, Jessica Pratt

RE: Support HB 3339, HB 3351 & HB 2554

Dear Chair Nosse and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Association of Oregon Counties, representing Oregon's county governments, I am writing in support of HB 3339, HB 3351 & HB 2554 with an important qualifier.

County boards of commissioners are the Local Mental Health Authority, with the duty to administer Oregon's mental health policies, provide oversight and accountability for our state-county shared services and create a plan for the local behavioral health system of care.

Counties partner with the Oregon Health Authority to provide behavioral health services and supports that help our communities thrive and reduce avoidable hospital stays and encounters with law enforcement and the courts.

One of the significant challenges that counties and their community mental health programs currently face is chronic vacancies in critical public services like behavioral health crisis response and intensive case management for our community members with the most acute and complex health challenges. These are services that require in-person care at a time when a significant portion of the workforce is accustomed to setting their own schedules and working remotely.

County governments are supportive of licensure compacts for psychologists, counselors and social workers to increase our local programs' ability to recruit and fill these key vacancies. **At the same time, we are concerned about the potential scope of these compacts providing further incentive for this critically needed in-person workforce to operate remotely if out of state providers of telehealth are included in the compact.**

The Association of Oregon Counties asks for your support to enhance and safeguard the local behavioral health safety net workforce and we thank you for partnering with counties to serve all of Oregon.

Jessica Pratt
Legislative Affairs Manager
Association of Oregon Counties