



VANESSA CORNWALL

Intergovernmental Relations Officer
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DATE: February 19, 2025
TO: Joint Subcommittee on Human Services
FROM: Vanessa Cornwall, Lane County Intergovernmental Relations Officer
RE: HB 5025, Relating to the Financial Administration of the Oregon Health Authority

Dear Co-Chairs Campos and Valderrama, and Members of the Committee:

Lane County appreciates the significant investments being made in behavioral health through HB 5025. Increased access to appropriate residential treatment facilities for people experiencing behavioral health disabilities is essential in assuring the jails and streets of our communities are not the only available places for people who need ongoing behavioral health treatment to stay stable and housed.

Recognizing that the future of behavioral health needs to be in the reinforcement of systems within communities that provide appropriate treatment, Lane County has concerns about investing \$1 billion in the state hospital system. Though we recognize the need for state hospital services, Lane County is also working on multiple, local proposals, including a very high-level stabilization center, which would divert individuals from the criminal justice system into behavioral health treatment. The goal is to dramatically reduce the need for use of Aid and Assist programming, and state hospital resources. Unfortunately, diverting so many funds into a state hospital system that is struggling to meet the state's needs prevents important investments at the local level that will help reduce the need for state hospital resources in the future. We encourage additional local investment in projects and programs run by CMHPs that show promise in reducing state hospital demand.

In Public Health, Lane County is facing an evolving landscape that demands a more robust and adaptable public health system. The Covid-19 pandemic revealed both the strengths and significant gaps in our public health capacity. The reductions in public health modernization funding proposed in this budget threatens to return public health to pre-pandemic levels of readiness during a time of great uncertainty regarding continued federal capacity to monitor and report on public health threats. While the Governor's Recommendation Budget is a step in the right direction, the need to invest additional monies into public health modernization remains significant. Lane County supports the request to add an additional \$25,000,000 to address public health funding shortfalls.

Lane County urges the passage of HB 5025, with additional investment in local mental health and public health programs. This funding is necessary to develop a comprehensive behavioral and public health system by strengthening community-based services, expanding crisis intervention resources, and growing the behavioral health workforce.

**ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED BY VANESSA CORNWALL, LANE COUNTY
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS OFFICER**