

February 24, 2025

Re: HB 3129 – Higher Ed Behavioral Health Workforce Expansion Fund – Support

To: Chair Rep. Zach Hudson, Vice Chairs Rep. Lisa Fragala and Rep. Darin Harbick and members of the House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development

On behalf of Clackamas Community College, I am writing to express support for Oregon House Bill 3129, which invests in Oregon's behavioral health workforce. As an institution dedicated to fostering equitable, innovative, and responsive education, we recognize the critical need to strengthen our mental health services by expanding access to quality training and education.

At Clackamas Community College, we serve a diverse community of learners who are committed to creating positive change in our state. HB 3129 will not only address the urgent shortage of behavioral health professionals but will also empower our students and educators through targeted investments in workforce development. In particular, we believe this bill will make a significant difference in the following areas:

- **Workforce Shortages Must Be Addressed**

Oregon is facing a severe shortage of behavioral health professionals. HB 3129 will provide essential funding to build a robust pipeline of qualified individuals, ensuring that communities across our state gain access to the critical mental health services they need.

- **Reducing Barriers for Students and Future Providers**

Many aspiring behavioral health professionals encounter financial and logistical challenges during their education and training. This legislation will reduce these barriers, enabling more students to complete their training and successfully enter the workforce.

- **Improving Diversity and Expanding Access to Underserved Communities**

Investing in the education of a diverse mental health workforce will have far-reaching benefits. Not only will it improve service accessibility in historically underserved communities, but it will also enrich the field by incorporating a broader range of perspectives and experiences.

Clackamas Community College remains committed to advancing educational opportunities that directly contribute to the well-being of our communities. We urge the committee to invest in Oregon's future by passing HB 3129, thereby strengthening the mental health workforce and ensuring a brighter, healthier future for all Oregonians.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

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