



March 4, 2025

House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Testimony in Support of the Concept of HB 2206

Dear Chair Nosse, Vice Chairs Javadi and Nelson, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of New Narrative, I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the concept of HB 2206, which would establish a CCO/Provider Task Force on Mental Health Residential Facilities. This bill presents an important opportunity to foster collaboration between providers, CCOs, and stakeholders to strengthen Oregon's residential behavioral health system.

About New Narrative

New Narrative is a nonprofit behavioral health organization committed to providing person-centered, trauma-informed care to individuals experiencing serious mental health challenges. We offer residential treatment, supportive housing, outpatient services, and peer-led programs to help individuals achieve stability and recovery. As an organization that is a current stakeholder in policy discussion through both the Oregon Council for Behavioral Health (OCBH) and the Tri-County Behavioral Health Providers Association (TCBHPA), we recognize the importance of provider and CCO collaboration in creating effective solutions for residential mental health services.

Considerations for the Task Force

While we support the creation of this task force, there is a need to recognize key issues that it will need to address, including:

- Shortages of staff that limit capacity and quality of care in the residential environment.
- Funding and reimbursement policy that fails to pay the full cost of delivering care consistently. *Is this valid?*
- Regulatory and administrative complexity creates inefficiencies and unintended barriers to service delivery.
- The need for clinically appropriate placements—providing people with the correct level of care for acuity and specialized services, not just bed availability.

This workgroup is necessary as it requires OHA or external expertise to determine what is federally allowable under our current waiver, and what is allowable under our current lawsuits regarding management of the state hospital. These are incredibly complex Medicaid and legal determinations that could impact how the benefit is managed and require time and expertise to get this right.

We applaud the committee for bringing together providers, CCOs, and key stakeholders to address these urgent issues. As this bill moves forward, New Narrative hopes to further engage in the task force process and provide solutions that strengthen the behavioral health system and results for Oregonians in need.

Thank you for your time and commitment to this important issue. We welcome any questions and look forward to continued collaboration.

Sincerely,

Julie Ibrahim, CEO

8915 SW Center St. Tigard, OR 97223
NewNarrativePDX.org