



3/17/2025

Dear Chair Reynolds, Vice Chair Anderson, and Members of the Senate Committee on Early Childhood and Behavioral Health

On behalf of the Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs I am writing to express our strong support for SB 142 -1, which takes a critical step in addressing Oregon's behavioral health workforce crisis. As an organization committed to the well-being of children, youth, and families, we recognize the urgent need to invest in workforce development to ensure that essential behavioral health services remain accessible and effective across our state.

SB 142 -1 prioritizes workforce sustainability by establishing grant programs to support recruitment, retention, and training of behavioral health professionals. By providing financial assistance for education, expanding training opportunities, and funding loan repayment and forgiveness programs, this bill helps to build a diverse and skilled workforce capable of meeting the growing demand for behavioral health services.

Specifically, we support:

- Targeted Workforce Development – Providing grants for individuals from priority populations to pursue behavioral health careers, ensuring a pipeline of diverse professionals equipped to serve Oregon's communities.
- Training Program Expansion – Supporting organizations in developing and enhancing behavioral health workforce training programs to improve service delivery and quality of care.
- Recruitment & Retention Efforts – Investing in financial incentives such as loan repayment and forgiveness for providers in critical shortage areas, reducing barriers for those entering and staying in the field.

The Oregon Alliance is a dedicated champion and established voice in advocating for the safety, health, and well-being of children, youth, families, and communities across Oregon. We are a diverse group of organizations serving Oregon's kids and their families at home, in school, in residential settings, and within the community. Members of our association rank the behavioral health workforce crisis in Oregon as a top issue when serving their communities. Without a robust, well-supported workforce, children, youth, and families struggling with mental health and substance use disorders will continue to face significant barriers to care. SB 142 -1 is a necessary and timely investment in our state's future, and we urge the committee to advance this legislation without delay.

Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue. We welcome any opportunity to collaborate and support efforts to strengthen Oregon's behavioral health workforce.

Sincerely,

Vera Stoulil
CEO, Oregon Alliance

Empowering Organizations,
Transforming Lives