

County Commissioners
Danielle Bethell, Chair
Colm Willis
Kevin Cameron



Chief Administrative Officer
Jan Fritz

MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

March 18, 2025

Chair Representative Rob Nosse
Vice-Chair Representative Cyrus Javadi
Vice-Chair Representative Travis Nelson
Members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

Subject: Support for HB 2056 with the -1 Amendment

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

The Marion County Board of Commissioners writes to express our support for House Bill 2056 with the -1 amendment. This legislation is critical to ensuring that Community Mental Health Programs across Oregon receive the funding necessary to fulfill their statutory obligations and provide essential behavioral health services.

Counties are on the front lines of addressing behavioral health crises, ensuring that individuals in need receive crisis intervention, civil commitment services, and Aid & Assist support. However, a cost study conducted by the Oregon Health Authority has confirmed that these programs are operating with a significant funding gap. The study found that Community Mental Health Programs face a \$32.4 million annual shortfall, which places an increasing strain on local resources and limits the ability to provide legally required services. As a result, law enforcement agencies, emergency departments, and the criminal justice system are frequently left to manage individuals who should be receiving dedicated behavioral health care.

House Bill 2056, with the -1 amendment, appropriates \$64.8 million to help stabilize and sustain these core services. This funding will allow Community Mental Health Programs to provide timely care for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis, strengthen mobile crisis response teams and stabilization programs, and reduce reliance on costly emergency room visits and incarceration. Additionally, this investment will ensure that law enforcement and first responders are not solely responsible for addressing behavioral health crises but instead can rely on a well-supported mental health system to provide necessary care.

Oregonians experiencing a crisis deserve timely and appropriate treatment, and counties should not have to divert limited local resources to cover what is fundamentally a state responsibility. The inclusion of an emergency clause underscores the urgency of addressing this issue, and we urge your support for the swift passage of House Bill 2056 with the -1 amendment.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We appreciate your leadership and commitment to strengthening Oregon's behavioral health system.

Sincerely,

Danielle Bethell
Chair

Colm Willis
Commissioner

Kevin Cameron
Commissioner