



Disability  
Rights  
Oregon

TO: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care  
FROM: Disability Rights Oregon  
DATE: March 19, 2025  
RE: HB 2056

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Javadi and Nelson,

For the record, my name is Ben Gurewitz, and I am the Deputy Director of Public Policy at Disability Rights Oregon (DRO). DRO is Oregon's designated Protection and Advocacy System, charged with protecting, advocating for, and enforcing the rights of people with disabilities. I am writing in strong support of HB 2056.

HB 2056 would allocate funds to close the Community Mental Health Program (CMHP) funding gap identified in the HB 4092 (2024) cost study on Aid & Assist, Civil Commitment, and Crisis Services. The study found that annual CMHP staff costs for these services increased from \$65.4 million in CY22 to \$84.0 million in CY23. The gap between CMHP costs and CFAA funding, excluding one-time allocations, was \$15.3 million in CY22, \$15.0 million in CY23, and \$16.2 million for the first half of CY24.

Adequate CMHP funding is essential for expanding community-based behavioral health services that help individuals recover instead of remaining stuck in jail or the Oregon State Hospital. In her tenth report, Dr. Pinal's emphasizes the urgent need for increased CMHP funding to ensure rapid access to housing and services for individuals transitioning out of the state hospital. She also warns that without sufficient funding, CMHPs will struggle to provide flexible housing support, increasing the risk of homelessness, destabilization, further involvement in the criminal legal system, and the need for higher levels of care.

This funding is critical to successfully transitioning Aid & Assist individuals from the hospital into appropriate community placements where they can receive the services necessary for recovery.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

#### **About Disability Rights Oregon**

Since 1977 Disability Rights Oregon has been the State's Protection and Advocacy System.<sup>1</sup> We are authorized by Congress to protect, advocate, and enforce the rights of people with

disabilities under the U.S. Constitution and Federal and State laws, investigate abuse and neglect of people with disabilities, and “pursue administrative, legal, and other appropriate remedies”.<sup>2</sup> We are also mandated to "educate policymakers" on matters related to people with disabilities.<sup>3</sup>

**If you have any questions regarding DRO’s position on this legislation, please call Ben Gurewitz 971-806-7908 or email him at [bgurewitz@droregon.org](mailto:bgurewitz@droregon.org)**

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<sup>1</sup> See ORS 192.517.

<sup>2</sup> See 42 U.S.C. § 15041 et seq; 42 U.S.C. § 10801 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> See 42 U.S. Code § 15043(a)(2)(L).