



Clatsop County

Board of Commissioners

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March 19, 2025

House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support House Bill 2056-1 – Closing the Funding Gap for Mandated County Behavioral Health Services

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

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners strongly supports House Bill 2056-1 and urges its passage to address the funding gap for county-mandated behavioral health services, including civil commitment, aid and assist community restoration, and crisis response.

Counties across Oregon are facing significant challenges in delivering these state-mandated essential services due to longstanding underfunding, which has strained local resources and limited our ability to meet the growing needs of our communities. House Bill 4092 (2024) required the Oregon Health Authority to conduct a current cost assessment of these programs, which found a \$64.8 million statewide shortfall in funding for these critical services. This funding shortfall directly impacts Clatsop County and other local governments, forcing difficult decisions about service availability and limiting our capacity to respond effectively to behavioral health crises. Without adequate funding, counties cannot provide the timely, on-demand services that our communities need, nor can we effectively coordinate with law enforcement, courts, and healthcare providers to support individuals in crisis.

In Clatsop County, Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare (CBH), our contracted provider for community mental health programs, has identified several critical gaps that could be addressed with additional funding from HB 2056-1:

Crisis Services:

- Two additional peer support workers are essential for the crisis team to effectively meet the growing local demand. These workers would provide continuous, on-the-ground support in local shelters, helping high-acuity individuals—including Oregon State Hospital (OSH) discharges and psychiatric step-downs—before their conditions escalate into full-blown crises.
- Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS) are critically underfunded, covering only 0.8 full-time equivalent (FTE) for what is expected to be a 24/7 program. To truly meet this need, at least two additional full-time positions are required.
- A Crisis Stabilization Center is a much-needed resource in Clatsop County to provide immediate care and reduce reliance on emergency departments and law enforcement interventions.

Forensic Services:

- One of the greatest barriers for our local forensic mental health program is the lack of appropriate supportive housing for individuals transitioning from OSH. Without local step-down options, those who no longer meet OSH criteria, but are not yet fully stabilized, continue to cycle through the aid and assist system and the courts instead of receiving the necessary support to recover in a community setting.
- Legal restrictions prevent continued support for individuals once they are re-incarcerated. However, this is the most critical time for intervention to prevent further institutionalization and break the cycle of recidivism.

Civil Commitment Services:

- Inadequate funding prevents CBH from employing a full-time investigator for civil commitment evaluations, creating delays and challenges in addressing urgent cases.
- A severe shortage of placement resources, including Residential Treatment Facilities (RTFs) and Secure Residential Treatment Facilities (SRTFs), limits CBH's ability to provide appropriate housing and care for individuals in need.

HB 2056-1 proposes a \$64.8 million General Fund allocation that is essential to ensuring counties like Clatsop can meet the growing demand for behavioral health services and provide timely, effective intervention for individuals in crisis. Without this funding, counties will continue to struggle to meet their state-mandated responsibilities, leaving individuals without the support they need and placing additional strain on law enforcement, courts, and emergency departments.

For these reasons, we strongly urge your YES vote on HB 2056-1 to fully fund these critical programs and ensure that Clatsop County and other communities across Oregon have the resources needed to effectively respond to behavioral health crises.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Mark Kujala, Chair
District 1