



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

April 16, 2025

Joint Ways & Means Committee Co-Chairs
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Leiber and Sanchez,

I am writing to express my strong support for the University of Oregon's request for \$53.25m to build a Children's Behavioral Health Building on the NE Portland campus. This project represents a critical opportunity to address the growing behavioral health challenges faced by Oregon's youth, and I urge you to prioritize its funding.

Oregon's children are facing an increasing number of behavioral health challenges, including higher rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. This issue is compounded by the fact that Oregon ranks near the bottom in the nation when it comes to access to mental health care for young people. As a state, we must do more to ensure that children and families can access the resources they need to improve mental health outcomes and build healthier futures.

The proposed Child Behavioral Health Building represents a significant step forward in meeting this need. This new facility will increase the state's capacity to deliver high-quality, evidence-based care to children and adolescents struggling with behavioral health challenges. Beyond providing direct services, the building will also serve as a center for research and innovation, developing solutions that can be applied statewide to improve mental health care for young people. Additionally, it will help prepare the next generation of behavioral health professionals, equipping them with the skills necessary to address Oregon's mental health crisis.

By bringing together education, research, and direct service in one location, this facility will create a comprehensive approach to addressing youth behavioral health needs. It is a long-term investment that will not only improve immediate access to care but will also provide sustainable solutions to ensure ongoing support for Oregon's children.

The Prevention Science Institute (PSI) is one of the units that will be housed in the Child Behavioral Health Building. The PSI is a multidisciplinary research institute

PREVENTION SCIENCE INSTITUTE

1600 Millrace Dr., Suite 106, 6217 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403-6217

T 541-346-4805 F 541-346-4858 psi.uoregon.edu

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focused on understanding human development, preventing behavioral health problems, and implementing effective intervention in community settings. Our core mission is to improve the lives and well-being of children, individuals, and families throughout their lifespans. In the 30 years that we have been located in Portland, our portfolio has expanded dramatically from one or two federal grants at a time to 48 active grants in 2024. We have worked with more than 4000 families in the Metro area and trained more than 100 community-based providers to use research-supported interventions. The clinic, telehealth clinic, and research space to be included in this building will allow us to grow our research operations in the metro area and to provide direct service to more children and families than has been possible in our current and former locations.

This facility is essential for meeting the growing demand for behavioral health services in Oregon. I urge you to approve funding for the Child Behavioral Health Building so that we can make meaningful progress toward improving the mental health of Oregon's youth.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth Stormshak". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Beth Stormshak, Ph.D.
Director, Prevention Science Institute
University of Oregon