

HB 2059 – Next phase in building residential capacity

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

On behalf of the Association of Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP), I am writing to express our support for HB 2059 to invest in the next phase of residential capacity, prioritizing the highest levels of residential treatment facilities in the community as a critical part of Oregon's behavioral health continuum.

We are grateful to Governor Kotek for recognizing the urgency of this issue and including \$90 million in her recommended budget to expand residential treatment capacity. Additional residential treatment capacity is essential for individuals unable to aid and assist in their own defense due to an underlying behavioral health condition so that they may step down from the Oregon State Hospital. Residential treatment facilities are also critical for outpatient civil commitment, which is a growing trend since the state hospital is usually full.

Without adequate capacity in the community, individuals are stuck at the state hospital or jails, boarded in emergency rooms, or on the streets. A lack of access to residential treatment leads to long wait times and worse outcomes or even death, increasing strain on hospitals, law enforcement, and local communities.

Oregon has made significant commitments to behavioral health reform, and we must continue that momentum. Investing in residential treatment reduces pressure on hospital-based services and prevents incarceration, improving long-term recovery outcomes by ensuring individuals have access to stable, therapeutic environments.

Governor Kotek's proposed \$90 million investment is a strong start, and we must also ensure continued operations for sustainable and adequately staffed facilities. We urge the committee to fully support the investments in HB 2059 and to continue prioritizing behavioral health infrastructure as a fundamental part of Oregon's healthcare system.

Sincerely,



Cherryl L. Ramirez
Executive Director, AOCMHP