



Date: March 25, 2025

To: The Honorable Chair Rob Nosse
The Honorable Vice-Chair Travis Nelson
The Honorable Vice Chair Cyrus Javadi
Members of the House Behavioral Health and Healthcare Committee

From: Bennett Garner MD, Vice Chair
Oregon Psychiatric Physicians Association Legislative Committee

RE: HB 2015, Increased Secure Residential Treatment Capacity

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Nelson and Javadi and members of the committee:

My name is Dr. Bennett Garner. I'm a child and adolescent psychiatrist and Vice-chair of the Oregon Psychiatric Physicians Association Legislative Committee (OPPA). The OPPA is a branch of the American Psychiatric Association and represents psychiatrists throughout Oregon. OPPA strongly supports HB 2015, which has the goal of increasing secure residential treatment facility (SRTF), residential treatment facility and home (RTF and RTH) capacity.

There is no argument that the treatment capacity of SRTFs, RTFs, and RTHs is completely inadequate to meet the needs of Oregonians suffering from severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI). This bill is a result of suggestions developed by NAMI Oregon. It represents a very sophisticated approach to the lack of capacity by suggesting changes that could increase capacity throughout the state in a manner that could be considerably more cost effective. This bill directs the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to investigate rules changes that could reduce the cost of providing this level of care. These suggestions alone would represent a major step.

This bill directs OHA to look at the financial models under which these programs operate. OHA's current models and many of their associated rules do not correspond with the financial necessities and challenges of operating these kinds of facilities. One example is that rates change when the acuity of an individual changes although the cost of providing care to the entire population within the program do not change. A related problem is the tool upon which the rate changes are based, the Level of Service Inventory (LSI), has never been reliably validated. This bill would direct the OHA to investigate this issue as well as others that make the sustainability of these programs challenges and thus contribute to a lack of treatment capacity throughout the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our perspective on this bill.