

**Oregon Health Authority  
Emergency Department Boarding of Psychiatric Patients**

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On April 25th, the Human Services Subcommittee recommended acknowledging receipt of a report from the Oregon Health Authority on boarding of psychiatric patients in emergency departments in Oregon.

As a result of a budget note, the Oregon Health Authority contracted with Oregon State University's College of Public Health and Human Services to conduct a study, including data analysis and interviews of key stakeholders. The report includes factors contributing to the problem and proposals for potential solutions. The study concludes that emergency department boarding in Oregon is comparable to other states. Using a definition of boarding as more than 24 hours in the ED, about 0.5% of total ED visits, or 3,504 patients, experienced boarding during a year. Of patients who visited the ED for psychiatric purposes, 14.6% stayed in the ED for longer than 6 hours, and 3.5% stayed for longer than 24 hours.

Several contributing factors were identified, including limited outpatient treatment capacity, limited or underutilized alternatives to emergency departments, challenges in discharging patients to community settings, and inadequate capacity in more intensive treatment settings. The report brief includes ten actions that the agency has or will be taking to address these issues.

The Human Services Subcommittee recommends approval.