



OREGON PSYCHIATRIC
PHYSICIANS ASSOCIATION

Date: May 1, 2017

To: The Honorable Phil Barnhart, Chair
The Honorable Cliff Bentz, Vice-Chair
The Honorable Barbara Smith Warner, Vice-Chair
Members of the House Revenue Committee

From: Daniel W. Dick MD, Co-Chair
Craig Zarling, MD, Co-Chair
Oregon Psychiatric Physicians Association Legislative Committee

RE: HB 3085 Health Care Professional Training Fund

Chair Barnhart, Vice Chairs and members of the House Revenue Committee

The Oregon Psychiatric Physicians Association (OPPA), the Oregon representation of the American Psychiatric Association, was established in 1966. OPPA serves as the organization for medical doctors (psychiatrists) in Oregon working together to ensure humane care and effective treatment for persons with mental illness, including substance use disorders, and compassion for their families.

OPPA supports HB 3085, which establishes the Health Care Professional Training Fund. The fund, strategically implemented, could have a big impact for training mental health practitioners in our state – especially in rural areas.

In Oregon, untreated mental illness and limited access to mental health care are significant issues that lead to a significant financial and social burden. From 2009-2014, less than 50% of Oregonians with a mental illness or substance use disorder received treatment (1). The cost of untreated substance use alone was estimated to be \$5.93 billion dollars per year to Oregon (2). This lack of treatment is at least partly due to lack of access to care. As of August 2014, 32 of Oregon's 26 counties have been designated as at least one type of Mental Health Care Professional Shortage Area (3). With the expansion of healthcare through the Affordable Care Act, the increasing population of Oregon, and aging of our population increased demand on the already taxed mental health care system will increase the risk of more detrimental outcomes for Oregonians.

Funds from this program should be used to invest in primary care and general psychiatry providers. They also could be used to create a partnership between the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU) to create a 1 year psychiatric fellowship for Physician Assistants. This fellowship would increase the number of mental health providers with prescriptive privileges in practice in Oregon, augmenting the current rate of graduating Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners (PMH-NPs) and psychiatrists, and should improve access to care and the integrity of mental health care provided in the state's inpatient and ambulatory clinical settings.

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OPPA respectfully requests the committee to support increased investments in training Oregon's health care workforce. These would include the start-up of additional small primary care and psychiatry residencies training sites outside the metropolitan area. The start-up costs for investing in the healthcare workforce would be offset by the long-term increase in access to behavioral health care and reduction in the costs associated with untreated mental health issues.

References:

1. Behavioral Health Barometer 2014, SAMSHA