



Expand Access to Psychiatric Care for Rural Oregon – Support SB 1539

Chair Monnes Anderson
Cc: Senate Health Care Committee

On behalf of the Oregon Rural Health Association, I would like to express our **support for SB 1539.**

SB 1539 would expand access to psychiatric expertise for primary care providers across the state as they address the mental health needs of their patients. Though access to mental health care is an issue state wide, access in rural areas of the state is particularly limited.

According to the Oregon Office of Rural Health's 2017 Areas of Unmet Health Care Need Report, "There are 1.9 mental health providers per 1,000 people in Oregon. Twenty-four of 130 service areas (all rural) had no mental health providers. An additional 33 service areas (all rural) have 0.5 or fewer mental health providers per 1,000 people. The highest numbers per 1,000 are in the urban areas of Portland Downtown (15.9), Portland Inner South (7.8) and Eugene/University (7.1)."

SB 1539 is a cost-effective way of expanding access in those places that need it most.

Thank you for your consideration,
Sam Barber
ORHA Lobbyist