



OREGON PSYCHIATRIC
PHYSICIANS ASSOCIATION

Date: February 12, 2019

To: The Honorable Floyd Prozanski, Chair
The Honorable Kim Thatcher, Vice-Chair
Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

From: Maya Lopez, MD, Past President
Oregon Psychiatric Physicians Association

RE: Position statement on SB 424

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

The Oregon Psychiatric Physicians Association (OPPA), a district branch 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 SB 424, which requires law enforcement agencies to establish mental health wellness policies. OPPA served on the interim workgroup convened by Sen. Frederick to delve into issues related to mental health wellness for law enforcement officers and develop recommendations. This bill represents an important tool to help develop a systemic organizational response to challenges that pose a threat to the health and wellbeing of officers.

Law enforcement officers, with a mission to protect and serve the community, are trained to run towards crisis and danger, overriding the instinct to do the opposite. Like physicians, they often interact with people on the worst day of their lives and they sometimes respond to scenes of terror and tragedy. Over time this takes a physical and mental toll. Wellness policies can help law enforcement officers achieve well-being and

address individual and system-level challenges which contribute to professional burnout and heightened levels of stress.

OPPA appreciates the leadership of Sen. Frederick on this important issue and would be happy to serve as a resource for the development of wellness promotion policies, suicide prevention screening and mindfulness trainings.

Thank you for the opportunity to put this statement on the record.