



OREGON PSYCHIATRIC
PHYSICIANS ASSOCIATION



Oregon Council of
Child & Adolescent
Psychiatry



Date: February 25, 2019

To: The Honorable Rob Wagner, Chair
The Honorable Chuck Thomsen, Vice-Chair
Members of the Senate Education Committee

From: Ajit Jetmalani, MD
Oregon Council of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Oregon Psychiatric Physicians Association
Robin Henderson, PsyD
Oregon Psychological Association

RE: Position statement on SB 584 Statewide School Safety and Prevention

Chair Wagner, Vice Chair Thomsen and members of the Senate Education Committee:

The Oregon Psychiatric Physicians Association (OPPA), Oregon Council of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the Oregon Psychological Association support SB 584, which establishes a statewide School Safety and Prevention Committee.

Oregon's disturbingly high and persistent rates of youth suicide and suicide attempts have called for comprehensive action for years. While bullying is a ubiquitous phenomenon in our society, the advent of smart phones and related social apps continue to drive profound changes in how our children communicate and how all of us relate to each other. The "Pandora's box" of school shootings and violence is now open and actions previously incomprehensible are regular occurrences. It is the right thing to "go big" now...not later, to make schools a safe and supportive environment for learning and social emotional development.

This bill calls for utilization of the collective wisdom of professionals (educators, mental health, law enforcement), agencies, families and youth to address the rapidly shifting cultural forces that contribute to the epidemic of youth suicide and closely related phenomena of bullying and aggression towards others. With this bill and others, Oregon's investment in tips lines and regional threat assessment teams will finally

Oregon Psychiatric Physicians Association
PO Box 21571, Keizer OR 97307
info@oregonpsychiatric.org
www.oregonpsychiatric.org

be connected to prevention and postvention strategies that allow for a broader response than law enforcement can provide alone.

Members of our organizations are standing by to help by contributing to committees that develop effective practices and policies related to this bill. We feel reassured that as we serve families and youth in need of specialty mental health care it will be in partnership with many others.