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CITY OF

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**PORTLAND, OREGON**

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**Ted Wheeler, Mayor**  
Carmen Rubio, Commissioner  
Dan Ryan, Commissioner  
Jo Ann Hardesty, Commissioner  
Mingus Mapps, Commissioner

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March 3, 2021

Senator Kate Lieber, Co-Chair  
Representative Rob Nosse, Co-Chair  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE, Salem OR 97301

Co-Chair Lieber, Co-Chair Nosse, and Members of the Committee,

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic began, Oregon had one of the highest rates of mental illness, addiction, and suicide in the country. The City of Portland strongly supports state investments in community-based behavioral healthcare to address this persistent and growing crisis. The behavioral health safety net collapsed under the stress of the pandemic and nowhere is that clearer than in Portland and other cities on the front lines.

The Governor's Recommended Budget eliminates inflation for non-Medicaid behavioral health treatment. This devastating cut to community mental health will result in a loss to counties of \$22 million general fund for the 2021-23 biennium. State funding for adult behavioral health in Multnomah County has been flat for at least the last five years. The need for behavioral health treatment continues to climb and has been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, with the passage of Ballot Measure 110, we must fortify the Community Mental Health Programs and backfill the \$16 million gap for County behavioral health services.

To eliminate racial disparities and remove systemic barriers, the State must prioritize funding for culturally specific services and incentives for recruitment and retention of the workforce to increase the number of people of color and people from tribal communities in the behavioral health workforce.

The support system necessary to care for people experiencing mental health and addiction is under-resourced and overwhelmed, impacting homelessness, housing, law enforcement and other City services. Without proper resources to manage the health of our community, the mental health crisis will only continue to grow. We are committed to continue working with our partners at the State and regionally to support additional investments to close the serious gap in the delivery of services in Oregon's mental health care system.

We urge the Legislature to protect and fund preventative behavioral health programs.

Sincerely,



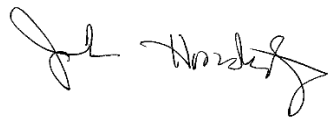
Ted Wheeler  
Mayor



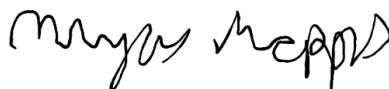
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