OREGON PSYCHIATRIC PHYSICIANS ASSOCIATION

Date: February 3, 2022

To: The Honorable Rob Nosse, Chair
The Honorable Raquel Moore-Green, Vice-Chair
The Honorable Lisa Reynolds, Vice-Chair
Members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health

From: Jeffrey Eisen, MD, MBA
President, Oregon Psychiatric Physicians Association

RE: HB 4004, Behavioral Health Workforce Grant Program

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs and members of the committee:

My name is Dr. Jeffrey Eisen. I'm President of the Oregon Psychiatric Physicians Association and I'm here on behalf of OPPA to testify in support of HB 4004. This bill requires Oregon Health Authority to distribute grants to behavioral health treatment providers for staff compensation and workforce retention and recruitment. OPPA supports this short-term fix and urges the legislators to work on long-term solutions.

The two most challenging areas for behavioral health delivery of care are ACCESS and WORKFORCE. The American Psychiatric Association reports that people often delay care due to an inability to access psychiatrists — this is the case in Oregon and across the country.

These two challenges are tied closely together.

The ability to delivery high quality, timely, effective care is dependent upon a skilled, dedicated workforce. Here's where we are now:

- Three in five psychiatrists are 55 years of age or greater (Wiener, 2018)
- The supply of psychiatrists working with public sector insured populations already has seen a decline of 10 percent from 2003-2013 (Ibid, 2018).
- According to the Health Resources and Services Administration, while the supply of adult psychiatrists is expected to decrease 20% by 2030, the demand for their services is expected to increase by 3%, leaving a shortage of over 12,000 fully-trained psychiatrists.
- High demand, long work hours, and inability for community based organizations to keep up with salaries accounts are just some of the reasons that psychiatrists opt out of public or non-profit sector work.

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- Reimbursement for services predominately remains in a fee-for-service model, and less so in a case rate model, neither of which provide enough support for the development of workforce infrastructure.

Providing short-term support for community based organizations will help tremendously for the immediate need. HOWEVER, in order to develop and maintain an engaged, sustainable work-force, long-term strategies must be developed in tandem with short-term solutions. The short-term support will increase wages, as well as the number of clinicians delivering care, and if this is not maintained in some constructive manner, community based organizations will not be able to hold onto the gains made as part of this important and meaningful plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our perspective on this bill. OPPA is looking forward to working collaboratively with legislative leadership and other stakeholders on ways to improve access for patients and to recruit and retain a robust workforce

Source for the above cited material:
Weiner, S. (2018, February 12). *Addressing the escalating psychiatrist shortage.* Retrieved from https://www.aamc.org/news-insights/addressing-escalating-psychiatrist-shortage