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House Bill 2235 Workgroup Behavioral Health Workforce Report Update

Presented to the House Interim Committee on
Behavioral Health and Health Care

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House Bill 2235 (2023)

Background: House Bill 2235 (2023) directs OHA to convene a 21-member workgroup to study and provide recommendations on major barriers to recruitment and retention of the publicly financed behavioral health system.

These recommendations will inform two reports due in January 2025 and December 2025.

The first report will inform on what resources to commit to OHA's budget, and the second report will inform on broader legislative actions to address the Behavioral Health Workforce crisis.

HB 2235 Workgroup Key Findings

- Administrative burdens undermine **retention** and **patient care**.
- Low reimbursement rates and inadequate pay **drive public behavioral health providers away**.
- Culturally and linguistically specific providers in the behavioral health field **face added burdens**.
- **Lack of structured career pathways** and workforce development persist.
- A shortage of master's level and advanced behavioral health professionals **limit access to care**.
- CMHPs and COA organizations, essential safety nets, **face additional burdens**.
- Licensing barriers **worsen workforce shortages**.

HB 2235 Workgroup Recommendations

HB 2235 required the workgroup to create recommendations based on these themes:

- (a) improve recruitment;
- (b) improve retention;
- (c) reduce administrative burdens;
- (d) increase pay and reimbursement rates;
- (e) reduce workload;
- (f) reduce burnout; and
- (g) diversify the behavioral health workforce.

The workgroup added another theme, workforce development, to separate general workforce-building efforts from recruitment.

These recommendations support the improvement of recruitment, the improvement of retention, the reduction of administrative burdens, the increase of reimbursement and pay rates, the reduction of workload, the diversification of the behavioral health workforce, the reduction of burnout, and workforce development.

Conclusion

The complete set of recommendations aim to build a resilient, inclusive system that meets the state's growing needs.

Legislative action and support from OHA are essential to transforming these goals into lasting solutions for Oregon's communities.

Thank you

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