

The background features a large, semi-transparent seal of the State Board of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. The seal is circular with a gold outer ring containing the text "STATE BOARD OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES" in blue. Inside the ring is a blue ring with the text "REGULATORY AGENCY" in gold. The center of the seal depicts a landscape with a plow pulled by a cow, a windmill, and a sunburst, with the motto "THE UNION" below it.

House Bill 5006, Section 266

Diversity Study & Written Report

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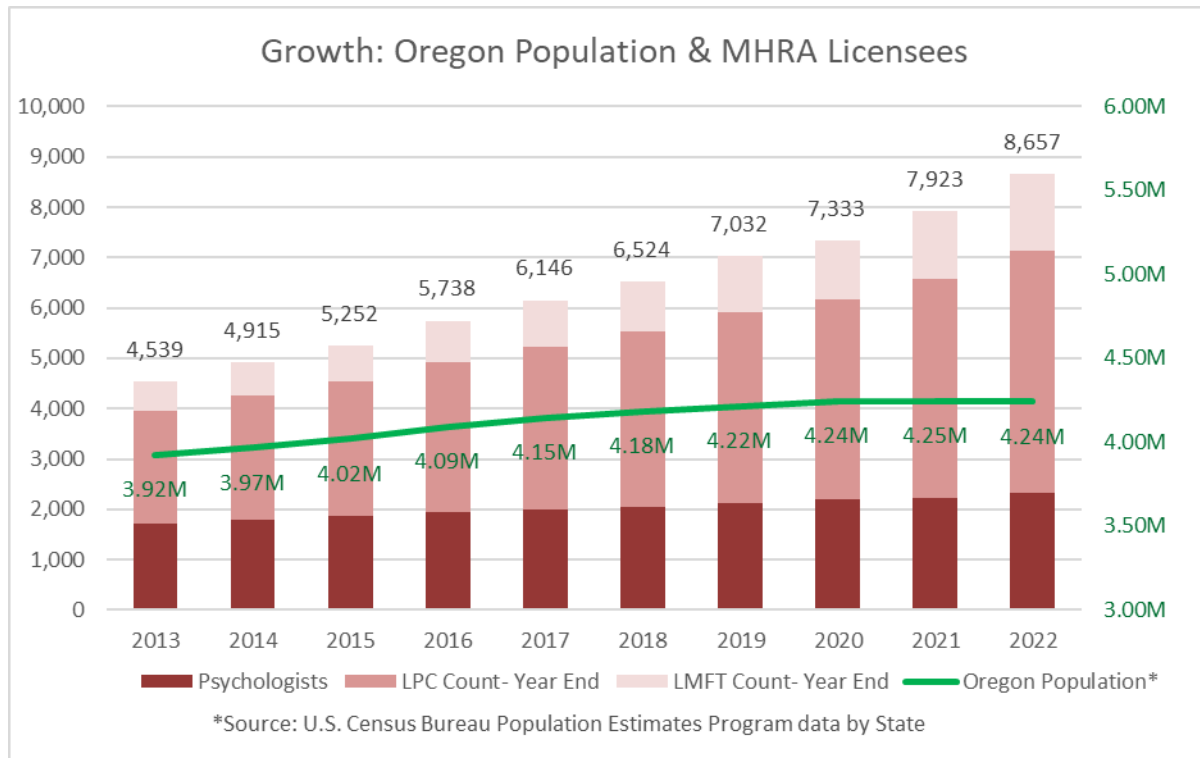
Celeste Jones, Ph.D., Board of Psychology Chair

Matthew Hatch, M.S., Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and
Therapists Chair



Introduction: MHRA Background

- The Mental Health Regulatory Agency (MHRA) was created to protect the public from harm by providing administrative and regulatory oversight to two regulated boards that regulate mental health professions in the State:
 - The Board of Psychology; and
 - The Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists.





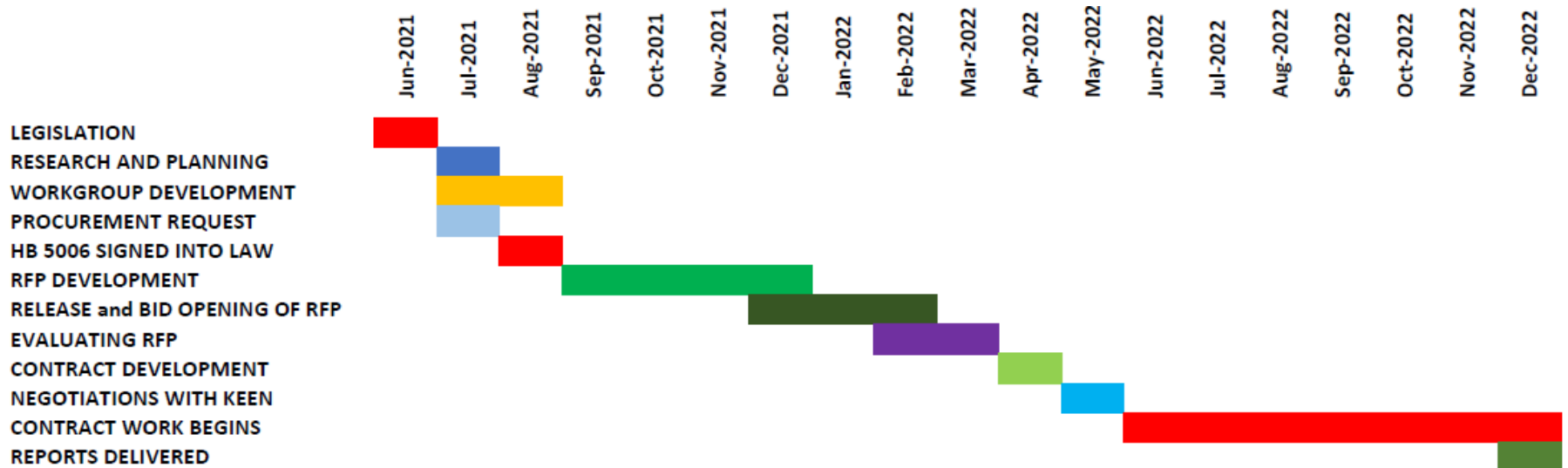
Introduction: Project Background

- **Section 266 of House Bill 5006 (2021)**, effective August 6, 2021, allocated \$300,000 in General Funds to MHRA “for a demographic study of licensees and a diversity plan.”
- The Bill’s **Budget Note** indicated that the Agency “shall engage a third party consultant to study the demographics of those individuals licensed by the boards and devise a plan to increase licensee diversity.” It required the Agency to submit a **written report** to a legislative committee by December 31, 2022, and **present** the information to a subcommittee of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means during the 2023 Legislative Session.
- An ad-hoc **HB 5006 Contract Workgroup** was formed by MHRA:
 - Seven volunteer Board members, including the Chairs of each Board
 - Four BOP members and three BLPCT members
 - Participated in 10 meetings between August 2021 and March 2022
 - Worked with MHRA staff, legal counsel, and an assigned procurement analyst from DAS on the procurement process for the third-party consultant
 - Developed the project scope of work, determined how long to accept bids, formulated the criteria for evaluating potential contractors, and determined methods of evaluating the selected contractor’s work
- The **Request for Proposal** was released in Oregon Buys on December 10, 2021. The Workgroup reviewed and selected the vendor, **Keen Independent Research, LLC**



Introduction: Project Background

- The contract with Keen was finalized on June 2, 2022, and the work began immediately.
- Agency staff provided information, compiled and sent requested data, and reviewed and provided feedback on various materials.
- The **Diversity Study** was completed by Keen on December 16, 2022, and the **Written Report** was completed by MHRA on December 28, 2022.





Introduction: Keen

We will now turn the presentation over to the Keen Independent Research team.



MHRA Report: Implementation

Diversity Study Recommendations

1. Commitment
2. Licensing Policies & Procedures
3. Compliance Safeguards
4. Communications & Service
5. External Factors



MHRA Report: Implementation

Recommendation #1: Commitment

Make and sustain a viable, active commitment to DEI

- Make a Visible, High-Level Commitment to Equity
 - Engage an implementation consultant
 - Create a DEI committee
- Operate Boards Inclusively
 - Explore options toward inclusive meeting facilitation
 - Maintain a remote meeting participation option to promote accessibility
- Align Resources, Monitor, and Make Adjustments as Needed
 - Work collaboratively with budgetary and legislative partners
 - Identify system and resource needs to achieve goals
- Create Systems and Opportunities to Welcome Ideas and Feedback
 - Early 2023: Board meeting discussions: outline short- and long-term DEI goals
 - Communications improvement project: explore new and creative ways to hear from stakeholders and to respond to feedback



MHRA Report: Implementation

Recommendation #2: Licensing Policies & Procedures

Reconsider licensing policies and procedures to support equity

- Reconsider Requirements that may have Inequitable Impacts
 - Character and fitness review process
 - Monitor for bias in required national and state examinations
- Consider Revised Supervised Clinical Experience Requirements
 - BLPCT: Proposed reduction to post-degree direct client contact hours
 - Consider seeking to clarify new requirement for employers to pay for supervision
- Consider Fee Modifications to Support Socioeconomic Diversity and Encourage Service to Underserved Populations
 - Propose significant reductions to licensing fees in the 2023-25 biennial budget
- Facilitation Interstate Credentialing for Services and Supervision
 - Whether to join interstate compacts is a policy decision for the Oregon Legislature and Governor, with comment from the Boards
- Reduce Friction Points in License Renewal
 - BLPCT's LC 0350 will allow move from annual to biennial renewals
- Evaluate Possible Modifications to Continuing Education Requirements



MHRA Report: Implementation

Recommendation #3: Compliance Safeguards

Add safeguards around complaints, investigations, and disciplinary actions

- Take Action to Mitigate Negative Perceptions of Use of Former Law Enforcement
 - Investigator trainings on trauma-informed investigation procedures
 - Consider how best to ensure investigator clinical competency
- Add and/or Communicate Procedures to Safeguard Respondent Rights and Well-Being
 - Review respondent notifications and orientation information, form letters, etc.
 - Communicate formalized procedures to help dispel misconceptions
- Add and/or Communicate Procedures to Safeguard Complainant Rights and Well-Being
 - Pursue opportunities to promote the integrity of the investigative process
 - Balance disclosure of information with protection of confidentiality
- Revise and Potentially Expand Disciplinary Action Options
 - Review disciplinary guidelines to balance consistency, transparency, practicality, and legal sufficiency
- Foster Transparency and Accountability to the Extent possible
 - Communication methods for more detailed statistics
 - Increase transparency to quell misconceptions about the disciplinary process



MHRA Report: Implementation

Recommendation #4: Communications & Service

Audit and improve communications and service

- Evaluate and Update Communications and Service to Foster Inclusion and Belonging
 - Review established scripts/procedures for use by MHRA staff
 - Explore possible options for customer service training & quality assurance
- Use Communications to Reduce Common Misunderstandings and Friction Points
 - Improve and expand communications to constituents about Board work & scope
 - Consider strategies to improving public perception
 - Continue to explore resources required to examine inquiry response latency on a regular basis
- Modify Communications for Complainants and Respondents
 - Covered in Recommendation #2
- Support Language Access to Information Currently Only Available in English (PDFs)
 - Integrate information contained in PDF format into the body of Board websites which have integrated language translation (Google Translate)
 - Continue to maintain compliance with state accessibility requirements



MHRA Report: Implementation

Recommendation #5: External Factors

Identify and to the extent possible advocate for, influence, or support changes in factors external to MHRA and the Boards to foster equity

- In addition to internal systems improvements, diversity within the regulated professions is an important aspect to support the Boards' public protection mandates.
- Within the Boards' authorized purview, engage in ongoing collaboration with external stakeholders, including legislators, educational programs, researchers, and professional organizations in support of changes that promote diversity within the regulated professions.
- More active engagement in keeping licensees and the general public informed about mental health advocacy news in the state



Conclusion

Oregon Mental Health Regulatory Agency, the Oregon Board of Psychology, and the Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists look forward to exploring and implementing recommendations provided in the Diversity Study, diligently exploring the options available to move meaningful change and ongoing improvement forward.

Being committed to the implementation and maintenance of systems that are fair, equitable, and responsive to the needs of diverse populations, we look forward to partnering with legislators and stakeholders to advance these aims.

Thank you for your partnership!