



ALEX CUYLER

Intergovernmental Relations Manager

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DATE: February 6, 2023
TO: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care
FROM: Alex Cuyler, Lane County Intergovernmental Relations Manager
RE: HB 2757, relating to crisis services

Dear Chair Nosse and Members of the Committee:

Lane County wishes to offer its support for HB 2757 which would increase and provide funding for coordinated mental health crisis response systems; the 9-8-8 Suicide and Crisis Hotline and mobile crisis response services. Depending on what amount this Legislative Assembly can agree on in terms of the per line tax provided under this measure Lane County will be able to deliver mobile services in a way that we have not been able to achieve to date.

In terms of the policy questions that your Committee will be taking up during the Public Hearing of February 6, 2023, we make a single request:

- Section 4 (page 4 line 35) of the introduced version modifies the existing statutory language at ORS 430.628 by eliminating the term “to the extent funding is available”.
We urge the Committee to instead seek an amendment that ensure “to the extent funding is available” to remain a guiding policy until the various funding streams from these services is well-established.

Stable (and sufficient) funding will allow us to meet the high staffing guidelines and strict response time requirements that are critical to an effective mobile crisis response service. It is estimated that the dispatch and response infrastructure will be \$160M per biennium. The coordination between 9-1-1 call center representatives and mobile crisis service responders will be essential to ensuring that we are deploying the right response to the right call and the costs of those systems will require a braiding of funds from multiple sources. It is clear the tax revenue from this measure alone will not be sufficient to ensure the services can be fully delivered across Oregon.

As communities continue to experience an increase in mental health crises, the need for resources and support for first responders and vulnerable populations become more important and this measure should be viewed as providing some funding for a piece of an overarching community-based system that will still require additional resources.

While the expectation is that mobile crisis teams will help mitigate pressure on the health care system by reducing emergency medical service and emergency department visits, there is not yet a mechanism for ensuring those cost savings will be reinvested in a meaningful way.

For these reasons, it is critical that the Legislature formally recognizes that adequate funding may not yet be sufficient, and continue to provide that modifier in statute.

ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED BY ALEX CUYLER, LANE COUNTY
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS MANAGER