

Submitter: Daniel Carr

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure: HB2457

If the state of Oregon wants to continue to see that mental healthcare services are available to the individuals in our community who need it, raising the reimbursement cost is essential. At present, direct support professionals and psychiatric technicians can make more working at their local McDonalds than they can working to provide the support and care that individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities and those experiencing a mental health crisis so desperately require. In the case of psychiatric technicians, this is a position that requires a 4 year degree or QMHA certification and a significant degree of empathy, skill, and experience -- and yet it still provides less than an entry level position working as a line cook or cashier in the fast food industry. The current wages are not enough to cover the minimum cost of living for a single individual in the city of Portland, and this has been forcing staff to find employment elsewhere in order to provide for their basic living requirements. Because of this, we have seen a mass exodus of staff, resulting in the closure of many programs and leaving the ones that remain struggling to find coverage so that adequate care can be provided for our clients. Please consider voting in support of HB 2457, both for the sake of the clients who receive care and for the staff members who so diligently provide it.