

SB 1594 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Health Care

Action Date: 02/14/24

Action: Do pass with amendments. Refer to Ways and Means by prior reference. (Printed A-Eng).

Vote: 5-0-0-0

Yeas: 5 - Bonham, Campos, Gorsek, Hayden, Patterson

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 2/14

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure establishes the Task Force ("Task Force") on Improving the Safety of Behavioral Health Workers, appropriates \$4,700,000 to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to support behavioral health apprenticeship and training programs, and appropriates an additional \$1,000,000 to the United We Heal Trust for grants to improve the safety of workers in behavioral health settings.

Detailed summary:

Specifies legislative and non-legislative membership of the Task Force. Directs the Task Force to produce a set of recommendations for improving the safety of behavioral health workers, including staffing levels, standards for reporting assaults, training, and funding mechanisms to pay for safety requirements. Directs the Task Force to make a preliminary report to the Legislative Assembly by September 1, 2024, and a final report with recommendations by December 1, 2024.

Establishes the United We Heal Medicaid Payment Program. Appropriates \$4,700,000 to OHA to provide payments to behavioral health care providers and employers to offer apprenticeship and training programs. Appropriates an additional \$1,000,000 directly to the United We Heal fund.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Incidents of violence in behavioral health care facilities
- Safety needs of behavioral health workers
- United We Heal apprenticeship program

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Replaces provisions of the measure related to safety plan requirements and appropriates \$1,000,000 to the United We Heal Trust.

BACKGROUND:

[House Bill 2086](#) (2021) directed the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to study conditions experienced by Oregon's behavioral health workforce. Among behavioral health workers, the most frequently cited reasons for burnout included work environment stressors and higher client acuity ([link](#) to Behavioral Health Workforce Report (2022)). Since the report was submitted to the Legislative Assembly, the Lund Report has reported on two separate incidents in which behavioral health workers have been stabbed ([link](#) to article dated November 29, 2023).

Workplace violence can range from threats and verbal abuse to physical assault. Oregon's Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) reported, between 2016 and 2018, 299 accepted disability claims from assault in nursing and residential care, 196 in hospitals, and 92 in social assistance settings ([link](#) to Oregon OSHA Workplace Violence report). The federal OSHA found an increased risk for workers in behavioral health settings,

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including inpatient and acute psychiatric services and residential care settings ([link](#) to Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence for Healthcare and Social Service Workers).