



February 5, 2024

Representative Robert Nosse, Chair
House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care
Oregon House of Representatives

Re: HB 4070

Dear Chair Nosse and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lisa Cline, and I am the Chief Executive Officer of Wallace (formally, Wallace Medical Concern), a community health center based in Rockwood and Gresham in East Multnomah County.

I write in strong support of HB 4070, which provides critical resources needed right now by youth and families across Oregon. Oregon ranks last in the nation for youth mental health, and it shows in our schools through rampant behavior issues and high rates of chronic absenteeism. HB 4070 provides evidence-based resources that will be quickly available for schools to support youth mental and physical health. A study conducted in Oregon found that youth are 10-21 times more likely to seek mental health support at a school-based health center (SBHC) and that SBHCs that increased mental health capacity were 12% less likely to report a depressive episode; 16% less likely to report suicidal ideation; and **18% less likely to report a suicide attempt**.

As the provider of school-based health services to students in the Gresham-Barlow School District, Wallace supports this bill because we see the need every day. We launched our program last spring, after engaging in an extensive planning process with the community to identify priority needs for school-based care. Mental health support topped the list with every demographic group among students and families. School faculty reported that unmet mental and physical health needs often create challenges in the classroom and in daily interactions with students.

Our youth need our support **now** and these resources will allow for an immediate increase in our capacity to provide it. I urge you to vote “yes” on HB 4070.

Thank you,

Lisa A. Cline, MPH
Chief Executive Officer