

Chair Nosse and Members of the Committee:

My name is Tammy Alexander, and I am writing as an Oregonian who supports school-based health care as an evidence-based approach to reach our students with the support and care they need where they spend most of their time, in school. As a parent and now grandparent, I know firsthand how so many of our students lack the support to keep them in school and be successful. We need healthy students so they can succeed in school and become productive, engaged Oregonians.

I'm writing to support HB 4070, which provides critical resources that youth and families across Oregon need now. Oregon is ranked last in the nation for youth mental health, and it's evident 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 10-21x more likely to seek mental health support at a school-based health center (SBHC) and that SBHCs that increased the students' mental health capacity, and they were 12% less likely to report a depressive episode; 16% of students seen in an SBHC were less likely to report suicidal ideation, and **18% less likely to report a suicide attempt.**

I support this bill because our students need to get care when they need it, where they can access it, and help them get on the road to health and wellness before it goes too far. It is far better and less costly to catch challenges in the early stages, keeping our children in school, ready to learn, and on the path to graduation! Our educational partners need all the supports and services to meet the growing challenges facing our youth today.

Our youth need this **now**, and these resources will allow for an immediate increase in our capacity to support them. I urge you to vote yes on HB 4070."

Thank you,

Tammy Alexander