



Testimony in support of HB 4071
Expanding clinical behavioral health workforce

February 12, 2024

Dear Chair Nosse, Vice Chairs Goodwin and Nelson, Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP), representing CMHPs statewide who manage and provide behavioral health services for their communities, I would like to express our strong support for the -1 amendment to HB 4071 to convene a task force with the ultimate goal of promptly licensing new health professionals and health professionals who move from other states to Oregon. We also support the -2 and -3 amendments to participate in the Social Work Licensure Interstate Compact and the Counseling Interstate Compact in order to improve public access to social work and counseling services.

We continue to experience an extreme workforce shortage in the public behavioral health system, particularly with qualified mental health professionals (QMHPs) – master’s level clinicians such as social workers, licensed professional counselors, and licensed marriage and family therapists. This bill is a step forward in increasing the number of QMHPs in the behavioral health system, which will improve access to care. We hope the next step will be allowing temporary licensure of clinicians who move to Oregon.

We urge your support of HB 4071 and the amendments.

Sincerely,

Cherryl L. Ramirez
Executive Director, AOCMHP