



Senate Committee on Early
Childhood and Behavioral Health

Oregon Behavioral Health Talent Assessment

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Higher Education Coordinating Commission**

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Future Ready Oregon and HECC's vision for Oregon and Oregonians

Future Ready Oregon contributes to HECC's vision and builds on numerous other workforce and education programs and investments in the \$4.1B (2023-25) HECC budget.

HECC's Vision

"The Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) envisions a future where all people benefit from the economic, civic, and cultural impact of high-quality postsecondary education, training, and workforce development."

The historic \$200M investment in Future Ready Oregon is administered primarily by the HECC, with some funds led by other partners (BOLI and YDO).

The HECC supports state goals for postsecondary education and training by a wide range of policy and funding strategies, including:

- setting a strategic vision for postsecondary education and training and advising state leaders;
- administering the statewide higher education and workforce biennial budget, establishing methodologies for distributing public funding to community colleges, universities, students, workforce boards, and other partners;
- coordinating postsecondary degrees, programs, and academic pathways;
- administering statewide financial aid, workforce, and educational programs;
- research, evaluation, and analysis.

Behavioral Health (BH) Talent Assessment – Purpose and Process

HECC Objectives

Established RFP and Report Goals

Understand behavioral health workforce needs

Inform program options that prioritize critical shortage occupations

Grow and diversify supply and distribution of behavioral health workforce

Project future workforce demand

Project demand for education and training programs across Oregon

Advocates for Human Potential (AHP)

Commissioned by HECC to Complete Report

Steering Committee

Focus Groups

Interviews

Survey

Behavioral Health Talent Assessment

Final Report Deliverables and Outputs

Literature review: existing reports on Oregon's BH workforce

Analysis: current behavioral health talent development strategies, and supply and demand

Inventory: postsecondary education and training programs

Recommendations: research, education programs, workforce development

Map: behavioral health career pathways in Oregon

View the Oregon Behavioral Health Talent Assessment here:

<https://www.oregon.gov/highered/strategy-research/Documents/Reports/2025-Oregon-Behavioral-Health-Talent-Assessment-Report-final.pdf>

Steering Committee Members

- **Jill Archer**, Care Oregon
- **Alicia Beymer**, Peace Health
- **Gerardo Cifuentes**, Portland Community College
- **Jon Collins**, Oregon Health Authority
- **Heather DeSart**, Northwest Oregon Works
- **Heather Ficht**, East Cascade Works
- **Sarah Foster**, Governor's Office
- **Andrew Garland-Forshee**, Portland Community College
- **Heather Jefferis**, Oregon Council for Behavioral Health
- **Kim Parker-Llerenas**, Willamette Workforce Partnership

- **Jason Payton**, Oregon Employment Department
- **Maureen Zalewski Regnier**, University of Oregon and Ballmer Institute
- **Robin Sansing**, Southern Oregon University
- **Yvonne Smith**, Clackamas Community College
- **Monica Vines**, Central Oregon Community College
- **Kortnie Williams**, Northwest Oregon Works
- **Dr. Rob Winningham**, Western Oregon University
- **Evaon Wong**, Portland State University

Behavioral Health (BH) Talent Assessment – *Highlights from the Key Findings:*

Career Awareness & Recruitment

- Individuals with a family member or key family friend working in BH were 12 times more likely to enter the BH profession.
- Individuals are choosing BH pathways later in college.

Learner & Worker Retention

- BH majors in Oregon are less likely to graduate compared to the national average.
- 1 in 5 BH workers ages 30-39 estimated to quit their job in the next month.

Workforce Shortage

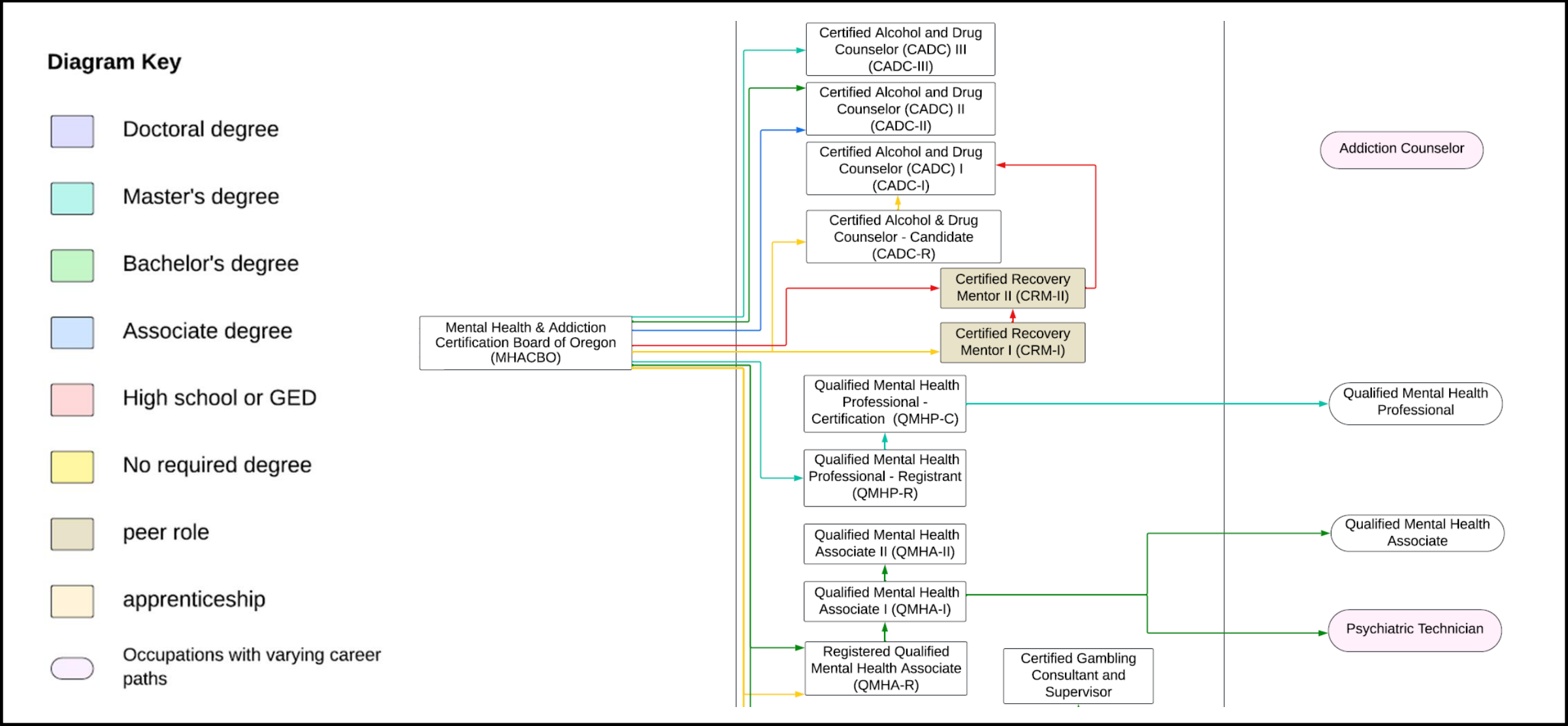
- Major factors contributing to the state's BH workforce shortage include:
 - insufficient preparation,
 - worker burnout,
 - low pay,
 - limited advancement opportunities, and
 - other systemic issues.

Patient Coverage

- 32 of Oregon's 36 counties lack even one provider per 1,000 residents.

AHP estimated roughly \$1.2 billion in turnover costs are spent per year in the BH system in Oregon.

Behavioral Health Career Pathways in Oregon map – snapshot



Behavioral Health (BH) Talent Assessment – *Key Recommendations Include:*



- Increase awareness of behavioral health career pathways, including postsecondary education programs, credentials, and related wraparound supports and services.



- Further investigate:
 - discrepancies between those completing their postsecondary education in and outside of Oregon that directly affect the choice of and longevity in the BH workforce; and
 - strong correlation between frequent and late shifts in deciding on a BH-related major and longevity in the BH field.



- Infuse the principles of equity and inclusion to diversify and expand talent.
 - Focus on rural and culturally relevant services.
 - Expand training that prepares a culturally responsive workforce, beginning with training leaders.
 - Identify and reduce barriers for individuals from communities of color who are seeking a career in behavioral health.

Next Steps – *Healthcare Industry Consortium, Spring 2025*

Convene new Behavioral Health
Workforce Workgroup

Build on findings and
recommendations from the
Behavioral Health Talent Assessment

Contact Us



Questions?

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Visit the HECC's Legislative and Policy Reports webpage at www.oregon.gov/highered/strategy-research/pages/reports.aspx to view the [Oregon Behavioral Health Talent Assessment](#) and the [Oregon Behavioral Health Career Pathways map](#).