



To: Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services

From: Randy Davis

Date: February 19, 2025

RE: Oregon State Hospital 2025-2027 Budget

Dear Co-chair Campos, Co-chair Valderrama, and members of the committee,

My name is Randy Davis, and I have worked at the Oregon State Hospital (OSH) for nearly 30 years. I'm here today to speak in support of the 2025-2027 agency budget for OSH.

I began my career at the Oregon State Hospital (OSH) as a Mental Health Therapist (MHT) in 1994 as an agency contractor and took a permanent position in 1997 in the Children Adolescent Treatment Services (CATS). The MHT position is the primary the direct care position at OSH. I have worked in all areas of OSH as an MHT in my career. In 2014 I was honored to be part of the Team that started the Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) Department. This new position I am a Staff Support Coach (SSC) that trains staff in CPS and OSH's internally developed Safe Together program that is the primary program to teach OSH staff how to verbally engage with patients and how to contain patients safely physically during behavioral emergencies. Every day in Salem the part of OSH that takes most of the direct admissions staff encounter patient that are unstable, and many times can be physically aggressive.

In my current role as SSC, I spend most of my day helping staff practice physical containment and, on the units, helping staff to contain patients and how to use verbal de-escalation techniques. Every day, we the front-line workers know that at any moment on any day they could be assaulted or injured while trying to contain an aggressive patient to keep all of the patients they serve safe.

Without a doubt, you have read about the Oregon State Hospital in the news. You have probably read about the changing demographics or the high level of acuity that some

patients exhibit. Despite this, I want you to know that there are a lot of people, like me, who have dedicated their career to rehabilitating and preparing patients to re-enter society. It is not easy work.

This is why I want you to carefully consider the investments in staffing and personnel safety at the Oregon State Hospital. When you are preparing the budget, I want you to think of people, like me and my colleagues, who show up on time and stay as late as they need us. This means that we are spending even more time away from our families and loved ones. It means that we are missing the dance or music recital, an important game, date night, and so many other moments with our families.

Oregon State Hospital Budget:

- There are many investments in facilities and security in the proposed budget, but none of it is as important as having adequate staffing levels.
- Grow and retain a sustainable workforce: I support the \$12.2 million investment to hire over 130 Mental Health Technicians to meet patient needs. One of the reasons for so much overtime is the lack of coverage for staff. In my current role, I have mentored and trained a lot of MHTs over the last ten years. The agency must also be held accountable to hiring the personnel needed if the funds are allocated.
- Improve Campus Security: I support the \$5.8 million investment to acquire a new security system to screen all staff and visitors for safety. I hope this committee will also look into what the hospital can do to support regular training to keep patients and staff safe.

The Oregon State Hospital provides 24/7 patient-centered, psychiatric treatment for adults who need hospital-level care. While the population at the hospital has changed due to factors outside of our control, there are so many workers committed to supporting Oregonians and their families through, perhaps, the toughest times in their lives. I ask you to please support the budget and investments in the workers to ensure that they too are cared for and valued.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Randy Davis