

February 21, 2025

Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Oregon Health Authority Public Health Division: Oregon Psilocybin Services Budget

Co-Chairs Campos and Valderrama, and Committee Members,

My name is Heidi Pendergast, and I am the Oregon Director for the Healing Advocacy Fund, a 501C3 non-profit dedicated to protecting and expanding safe, affordable state-regulated access to psychedelic healing.

Thank you for the opportunity to share information on the Oregon Psilocybin Services Program, housed within the Public Health Division at the Oregon Health Authority. This program, established under Measure 109, has provided life-changing hope and healing to over 9,000 clients in just the past year and a half, facing treatment resistant depression, anxiety, PTSD, and addiction—conditions that traditional treatments have often failed to address.

Oregon's psilocybin program, the first of its kind in the nation, was thoughtfully designed to create safe, legal access to psilocybin through a state-regulated framework. This framework is made up of a few important components to maintain client, worker, and community safety:

- It's only allowed for individuals 21 and older, in a state licensed service center, under the supervision of a trained and licensed facilitator.
- All clients must first be screened by service centers to ensure services are a good fit for their health background.
- Adverse events must be reported to the state when emergency services need to be called – of all the clients served, less than .12% have required emergency services.

This year, the Oregon Psilocybin Services (OPS) program is at a pivotal moment. A \$3.5 million shortfall within the OPS budget threatens to undermine its ability to provide equitable access to care, which would double licensing fees. For service center operators, an increase to the current \$10,000 annual licensing fees is not a change that could be easily absorbed. **This shortfall threatens to undermine Measure 109's core**

promise to deliver state-regulated psilocybin therapy, and the state's leadership in mental health innovation.

In the coming years, psilocybin therapy will continue to play a stronger role in supporting Oregon's goal to decrease mental health and substance use disorders. Additionally, 2025 is the first year there will be comprehensive data on the program thanks to legislation passed in 2023. Major research initiatives studying the impacts and outcomes of psilocybin services are also underway; this information will provide invaluable insights into how psilocybin services can be optimized to address Oregon's mental health crisis, and add to the important work being done to support health outcomes for Oregonians.

Oregon has the opportunity to lead the nation in addressing mental health challenges with compassion and innovation. Without your support, this mental health program could falter before it has the chance to fully demonstrate its impact. Please honor the will of the voters by supporting \$3.5 million needed to sustain the program.

Sincerely,

Heidi Pendergast
Oregon Director, Healing Advocacy Fund