



March 25, 2025

House Committee on Behavioral Health and Healthcare

HB 2024 – Supporting the Behavioral Health Workforce

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Nelson and Javadi, and Members of the Committee,

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB 2024-3, which is crucial for addressing the staffing shortages within Oregon’s behavioral health workforce. As the CEO of New Narrative, President of the Tri-County Behavioral Health Providers Association, and a board member of the Oregon Council for Behavioral Health, I’ve seen firsthand how these staffing challenges are impacting our ability to provide the services so many Oregonians depend on.

At New Narrative, we are focused on providing high-acuity, team-based care to individuals who face severe mental health and behavioral health challenges. Our work is centered on helping individuals with complex needs such as chronic homelessness, and mental health conditions. Through a comprehensive, integrated approach, we combine housing solutions, mental health services, and peer support to empower individuals to achieve stability and independence. But to continue this work, we need a stable and well-supported workforce – something that is increasingly difficult to maintain due to the chronic staffing shortages we’re experiencing.

The reality is that many behavioral health providers in Oregon are facing the same issues – compensation doesn’t match the demands of the job, leading to high turnover, burnout, and difficulty attracting and retaining the professionals who are so crucial to this work. This is something we are experiencing directly at New Narrative, where we are struggling to keep up with the demand for our services and ensure that we can continue providing the high-quality care our participants deserve.

HB 2024-3 provides a much-needed solution. By funding retention strategies like wage increases and childcare subsidies, this bill will help stabilize our workforce.

I strongly urge you to support HB 2024-3. This bill is essential to ensure that behavioral health providers across Oregon can continue to provide critical services and support to the most vulnerable among us. It will help us retain talented staff, reduce burnout, and ultimately improve the quality of care for the people we serve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Julie Ibrahim, CEO