

Melissa Todd, Ph.D. | Licensed Psychologist

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March 27, 2025

Re: Support for House Bill 3225

Dear Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Javadi and Nelson, and Members of the House Committee On Behavioral Health Care and Health Care,

My name is Melissa Todd, and I am a licensed psychologist residing in Eugene. I am also board president of the Western Oregon Mental Health Alliance (WOMHA), a volunteer-run, non-profit association of multidisciplinary behavioral health professionals located throughout the greater Portland, Salem, and Eugene areas. As a member of WOMHA's legislative advocacy committee, OIMHP, I advocated for SB 860 (2017) and HB 3046 (2021), and served on the Rulemaking Advisory Committee for HB 3046 (2021-2022). Today I respectfully ask for your support of HB 3225, a bill that seeks to ensure that Oregon-based, practicing physicians hold the majority of decision making positions within Oregon medical practices.

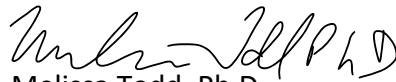
For over 10 years, I have been an independently practicing psychologist in my community specializing in clients who work in high stress, high performance environments. This niche has allowed me to provide care to a number of Eugene-based medical professionals, giving me an inside perspective on how the corporatization of medicine has affected them. **The term that best describes their experience is *moral injury*.**

Moral injury is a painful emotional and psychological experience that occurs when one's moral beliefs are violated and one is unable to act according to one's values. First identified in soldiers deployed to war and conflict zones, the experience has increasingly been applied to medical professionals who are unable to fulfill their professional obligations and provide the highest quality of care to their patients due to pressures from external forces. The pressures include being scheduled to see too many patients for too little time, operating with insufficient staffing, prioritizing financial targets over quality of care, spending more time on documentation than patient care, and being pushed to work beyond their personal resources. Practicing under these conditions may be profoundly distressing to individuals who enter the field to fulfill a sense of purpose motivated by the strong desire to help people. Medical professionals particularly experience moral injury when they perceive themselves as responsible for the downstream negative effects on patients, despite the fact that they practice within a dysfunctional system over which they have little control.

Moral injury often occurs within the context of *institutional betrayal*, which arises when the healthcare system fails to uphold its duty to patients and providers who depend on the system for their care and their livelihood. In some instances, the healthcare system commits abuses against its medical professionals such as blaming individuals for systemic failures, making examples of individuals in a public manner, hamstringing individuals who wish to leave the system with non-compete and non-solicit clauses, terminating employment as punishment, coercing silence through non-disclosure agreements, and threatening litigation. The medical professionals on the receiving end of these behaviors are likely to experience acute or chronic post-traumatic stress which harms not only them, but also the community which temporarily or permanently loses access to valuable health care providers.

Please vote to pass HB 3225, a bill designed to tip the balance of decision-making power away from profit-driven corporate entities, many of whom originate out-of-state, and back toward Oregon medical professionals guided by ethical standards and personal values to prioritize patient care and investment in our communities.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melissa Todd, Ph.D.", written in a cursive style.

Melissa Todd, Ph.D.

Licensed Psychologist