



January 23, 2024

Dear Co-Chair, Lieber and Co-Chair Sanchez,
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Committee

I am writing in strong support for the proposed public-private partnership involving Lane County, which would provide the much-needed Lane Stabilization Center, and PeaceHealth, which is offering to develop a new Behavioral Health Hospital with a 96-bed inpatient psychiatric facility and 24-bed adolescent psychiatric unit, co-located on the same campus.

Having grown up in Lane County and spending the past 25 years of my career here, I've witnessed firsthand the pressing need for a more robust and comprehensive behavioral health system.

Imagine a comprehensive and integrated crisis network in Lane County that saves lives by offering in-the-moment access to behavioral health services to individuals of all ages and demographics who need them the most. Instead of taking a loved one experiencing a behavioral health crisis to a crowded emergency department — where they might feel overwhelmed or leave before being treated — they could be welcomed into a trauma-informed and soothing environment. Here they would receive immediate attention and support, fostering a sense of safety and hope.

Picture bringing an adolescent in crisis to this calming space, where they can be directly transferred to an adolescent inpatient unit without waiting days or weeks in a windowless emergency department room for out-of-area placement. This allows them and their families to remain in the area to receive treatment and ensure they are connected to local resources upon discharge.

Envision having a resource available 24/7 for mental health and substance abuse care, meeting everyone's needs — from crisis intervention requiring inpatient psychiatric treatment to medication refills and connections to support services — on the same campus.

Additionally, imagine easing the pressure on our emergency departments as individuals, law enforcement and mobile crisis units instead utilize a stabilization center better suited to address a patient's needs. This shift would allow patients presenting for medical treatment in the emergency department to receive care more quickly and efficiently by an estimated 40 minutes.

The public-private partnership between PeaceHealth and Lane County can make this vision a reality. PeaceHealth has a long-standing history for continuously expanding and enhancing the spectrum of behavioral health care available in Lane County. In addition to inpatient treatment, PeaceHealth provides crisis services through emergency department evaluations, outpatient counseling and psychiatry, peer support services, intensive outpatient and partial hospitalization programs and transitional services, and is a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic.

It makes sense for PeaceHealth to partner with Lane County Health and Human Services to bring this project to life because the broad array of services the county provides, including the Lane County Behavioral Health Clinic, Lane County Treatment Center and Mobile Crisis Services of Lane County, complement those provided by PeaceHealth.

Oregon ranks among the lowest in the nation for access to behavioral health services for both adults and youth, and Lane County's prevalence of mental illness is among the highest in the state. This lack of access impacts countless individuals and families who are unable to receive the care they desperately need. As we face increasing challenges in behavioral health and substance use disorder care, the collaboration between public and private sectors has the potential to drive innovative solutions and expand access to critical resources. This approach not only addresses immediate needs but also builds a foundation for more resilient and responsive behavioral health systems.

All of this is a necessary evolution of our behavioral health care system, offering dignity, respect and effective care for all individuals in our community. This model is evidence based and proven to save lives.

Thank you for considering this essential development. I am hopeful that with your leadership we can bring about meaningful and lifesaving change.

With gratitude,



Alicia Beymer, MBA, CPHRM, CPHQ | Chief Administrative Officer

PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend

Pronouns: she/her

3333 RiverBend Drive, Springfield, OR 97477