

# Senate Bill 1547

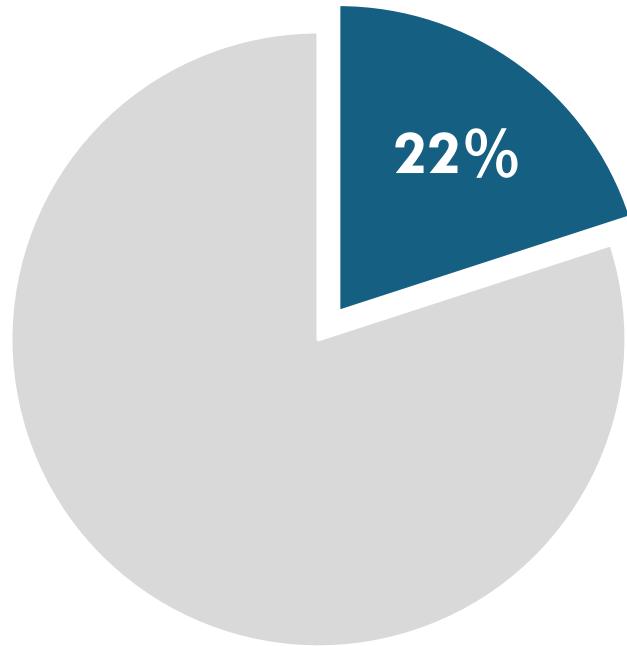
# Expanding the Youth

# Behavioral Health Workforce

**Katie McLaughlin, Ph.D.**

Ballmer Institute for Children's Behavioral Health  
University of Oregon

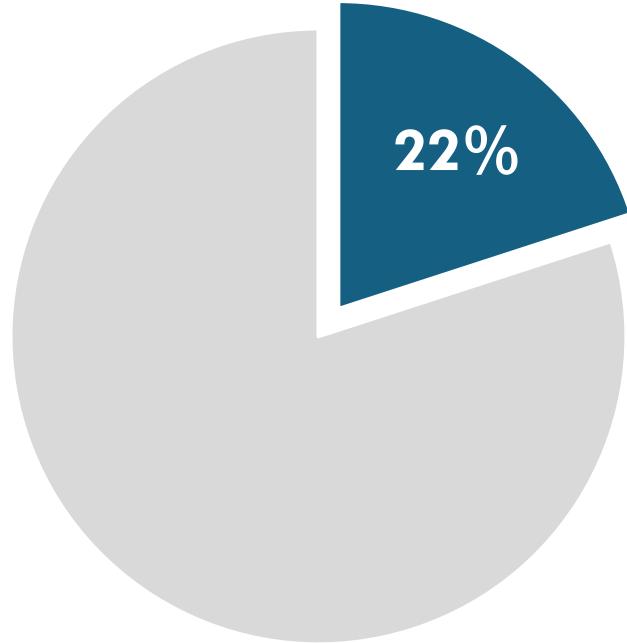
# Oregon Youth Have High Rates of Behavioral Health Challenges



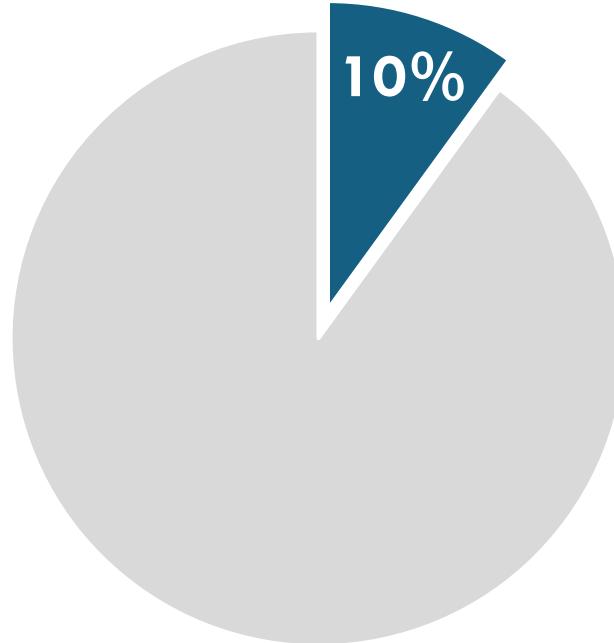
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Sources: Mental Health America, 2025: The State of Mental Health in America 2025; KFF analysis of 2024 National Survey of Children's Health

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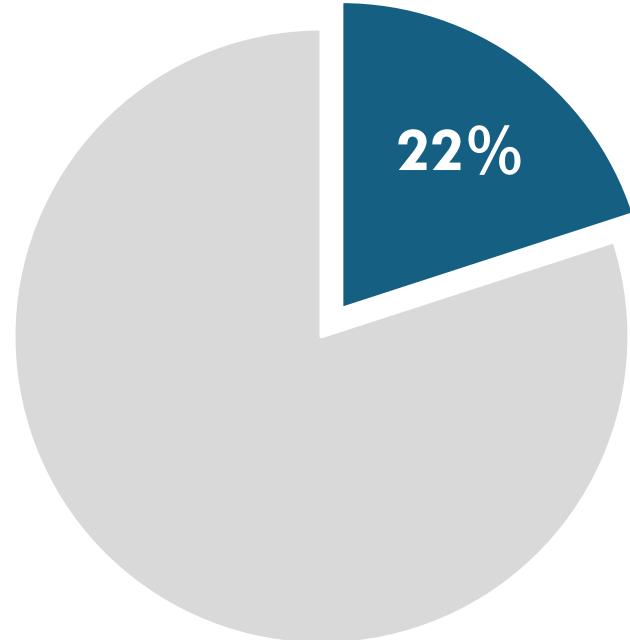
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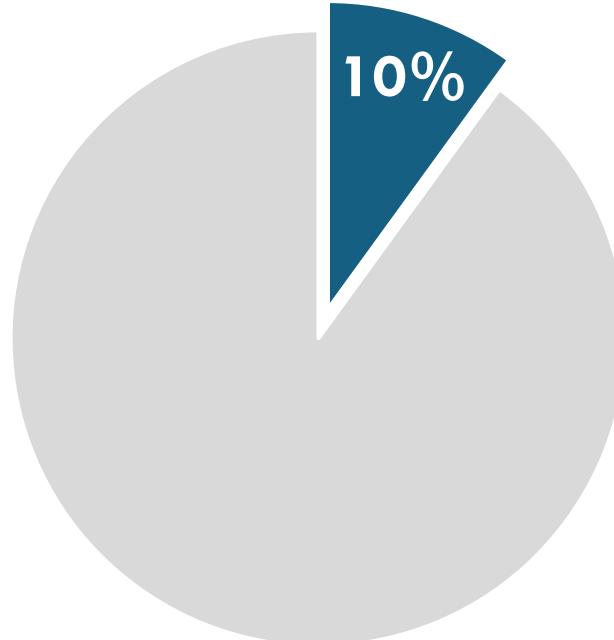
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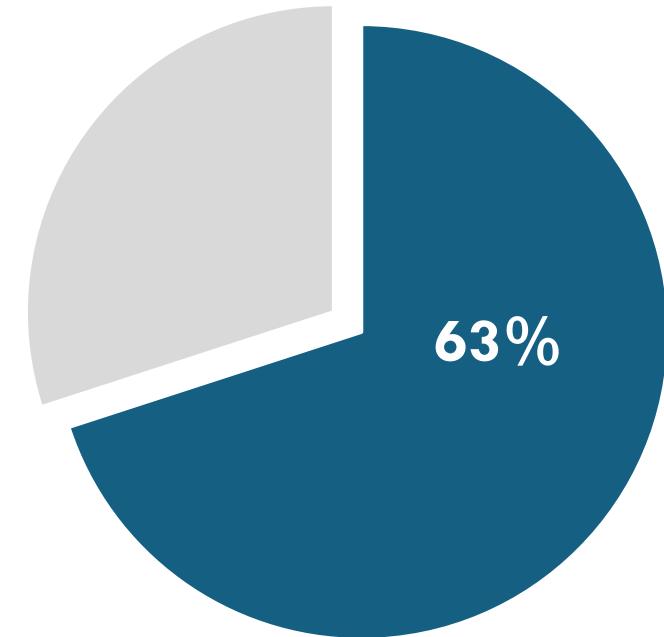
# Oregon Youth Have High Rates of Behavioral Health Challenges



**Youth who experienced severe depression**



**Youth who had a substance use disorder in the past year**



**Families who faced difficulties when trying to obtain youth mental health care**

Sources: Mental Health America, 2025: The State of Mental Health in America 2025; KFF analysis of 2024 National Survey of Children's Health

# The State of Youth Mental Health in Oregon (2025)

**47<sup>TH</sup>**

For youth  
depression

**47<sup>TH</sup>**

For youth substance  
use disorder

**39<sup>TH</sup>**

For overall youth  
mental health

Source: Mental Health America, 2025: The State of Mental Health in America 2025

SENATE BILL 1547

OR 2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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**HB 4151**

# HB 4151 Legislative Recommendation

## **Creation of a Licensed Behavioral Health & Wellness Practitioner**

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## Creation of a Licensed Behavioral Health & Wellness Practitioner

- Recommendation approved by the System of Care Advisory Council (SOCAC)

### Youth Behavioral Health Workforce Subcommittee

Final Report to the System of Care Advisory Council

*Oregon Child and Family Center for Excellence*

**SOCAC**  
System of Care Advisory Council

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Report to: System of Care Advisory Council

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- Recommendation sent to legislature in December 2025

Youth Behavioral Health Workforce Subcommittee

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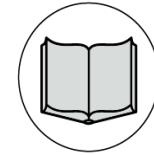


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# New Behavioral Health License

# Licensed Behavioral Health and Wellness Practitioner



Education

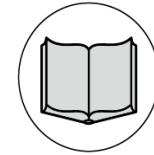


Community  
Organizations



Healthcare

# Licensed Behavioral Health and Wellness Practitioner



Education



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Healthcare

- **Scope of Practice:** Early identification, prevention and brief intervention services, skills training and support

# Licensed Behavioral Health and Wellness Practitioner



Education



Community  
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Healthcare

- **Scope of Practice:** Early identification, prevention and brief intervention services, skills training and support
- **Eligibility:** Graduates from applied bachelor's training programs that include at least **700 hours of supervised practice** in youth behavioral health services

- **No diagnosis**
- **No cognitive or educational assessment**
- **No delivering psychotherapy**
- **No prescription or medication management**
- **No independent practice**

## Practice Exclusions

- **No diagnosis**
- **No cognitive or educational assessment**
- **No delivering psychotherapy**
- **No prescription or medication management**
- **No independent practice**

- Requires ongoing formal supervision from a licensed behavioral health provider at the master's or doctoral level

## Practice Exclusions

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# Rationale for a New License

# Identified Needs New License Addresses

- **More than half** of families who seek youth behavioral health services in Oregon report difficulty accessing care

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- There is a substantial need for both culturally responsive **services** and a **more diverse workforce**
- Need for a more **highly trained** entry-level workforce in behavioral health
- Need for more **prevention-oriented services** in settings where families can easily access care

# Why a New License?

- **Scope of practice** for new bachelor's-level license is **distinct** from existing professions and credentials

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- **Aligned with other states** that have implemented similar credentials

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# Who would oversee the credential?

# **Mental Health Regulatory Agency (MHRA)**

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- Parallel license in other states (e.g., Nevada) is being overseen by the Board of Psychology

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# Support for this New License

# SOCAC

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System of Care Advisory Council



# SOCAC

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System of Care Advisory Council



CHILDREN'S HEALTH *alliance*



# SOCAC

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System of Care Advisory Council





Oregon  
Psychological  
Association



CHILDREN'S HEALTH *alliance*



**SOCAC**

System of Care Advisory Council





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OREGON COUNCIL FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

**SOCAC**

System of Care Advisory Council



National Alliance on Mental Illness



**Children's  
Institute**

**DRO** | Disability Rights Oregon



Oregon  
Psychological  
Association



CHILDREN'S HEALTH *alliance*



OREGON COUNCIL FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

# SOCAC

System of Care Advisory Council



the next wave of leaders



2016 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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- Identify behavioral health challenges earlier and provide access to early interventions that will **prevent** problems from worsening over time
- Increase the **diversity** of the behavioral health workforce
- Provide a **new rung** in the continuum of behavioral health support roles

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# Questions and Feedback