

Senate Bill 1547

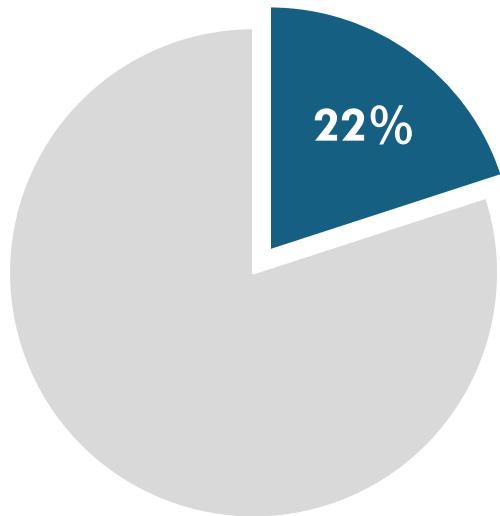
Expanding the Youth Behavioral Health Workforce

Katie McLaughlin, Ph.D.

Ballmer Institute for Children's Behavioral Health
University of Oregon

2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Oregon Youth Have High Rates of Behavioral Health Challenges



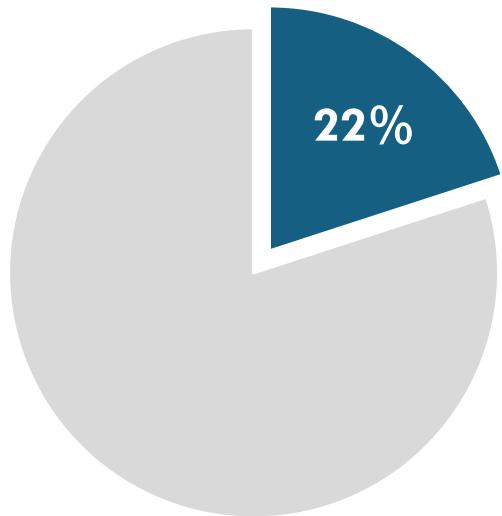
**Youth who
experienced severe
depression**

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

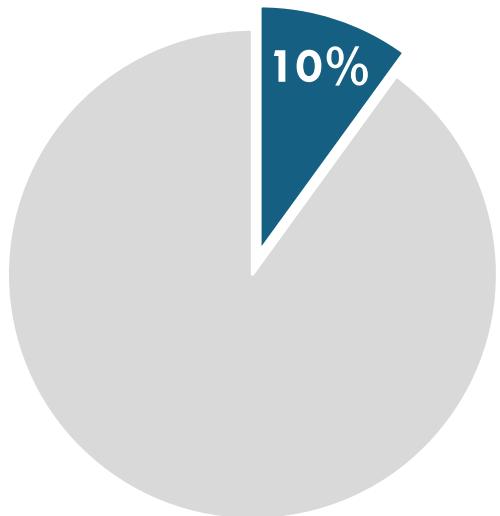
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OR 2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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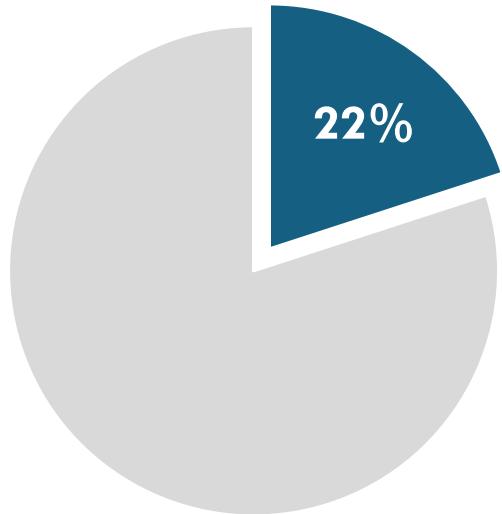
Youth who had a substance use disorder in the past year

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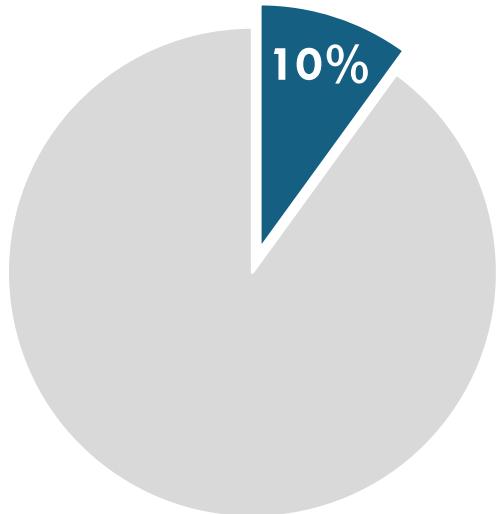
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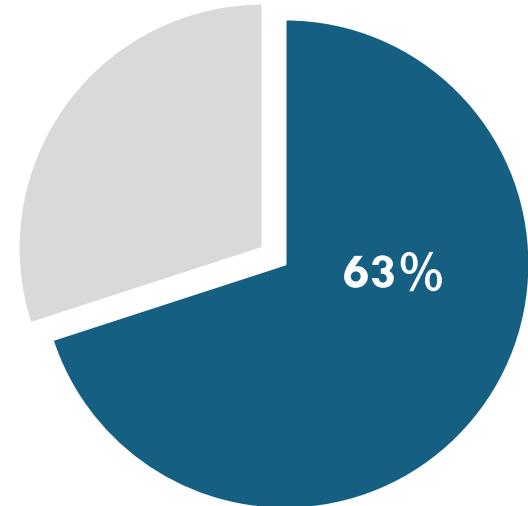
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Families who faced difficulties when trying to obtain youth mental health care

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

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The State of Youth Mental Health in Oregon (2025)

47TH

For youth
depression

47TH

For youth substance
use disorder

39TH

For overall youth
mental health

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

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HB 4151

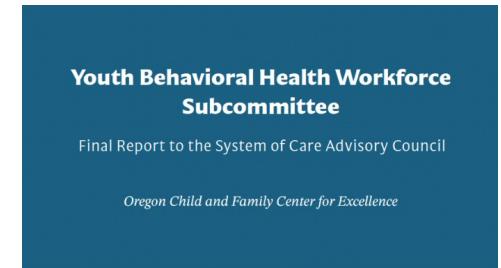
HB 4151 Legislative Recommendation

Creation of a Licensed Behavioral Health & Wellness Practitioner

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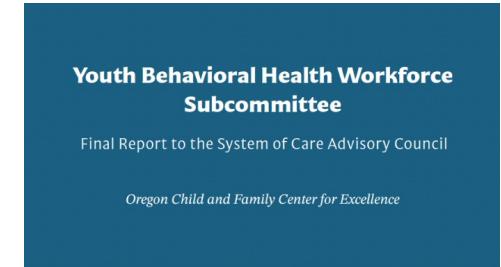
- Recommendation approved by the System of Care Advisory Council (SOCAC)



HB 4151 Legislative Recommendation

Creation of a Licensed Behavioral Health & Wellness Practitioner

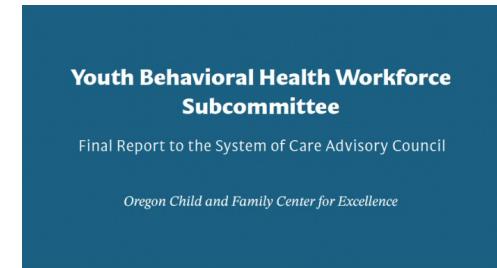
- Recommendation approved by the System of Care Advisory Council (SOCAC)
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- Recommendation sent to legislature in December 2025



New Behavioral Health License

Licensed Behavioral Health and Wellness Practitioner



Education



Community
Organizations



Healthcare

Licensed Behavioral Health and Wellness Practitioner



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

Licensed Behavioral Health and Wellness Practitioner



- **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

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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- 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

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

**Support for this New
License**

SOCAC

System of Care Advisory Council

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SOCAC

System of Care Advisory Council



CHILDREN'S HEALTH *alliance*



SOCAC

System of Care Advisory Council





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SOCAC

System of Care Advisory Council



OREGON COUNCIL FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH





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SOCAC

System of Care Advisory Council



National Alliance on Mental Illness





CHILDREN'S HEALTH *alliance*



OREGON COUNCIL FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



National Alliance on Mental Illness



**new
avenues**
FOR YOUTH



SOCAC

System of Care Advisory Council



**Children's
Institute**



Disability
Rights
Oregon



LatinoNetwork

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- Increase the **diversity** of the behavioral health workforce
- Provide a **new rung** in the continuum of behavioral health support roles

Questions and Feedback