



OREGON COUNCIL FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

February 3, 2026

Chair Reynolds and Members of the Early Childhood and Behavioral Health Committee,

Oregon Council for Behavioral Health (OCBH) is the nonprofit trade association representing more than 60 provider organizations that serve individuals living with the chronic diseases of addiction and mental illness. It is likely the behavioral health providers in your districts are members of OCBH.

OCBH writes you in support of SB 1547.

Behavioral health employers across Oregon are experiencing both increased demand for services and increased acuity among the individuals they serve. As a result, entry-level workers are being asked to bring a higher level of skill, clinical readiness, and practical experience into the workforce than ever before.

This approach also helps align behavioral health training with that of other health professions, such as nursing and medicine, as Oregon continues to move toward greater integration and parity within the broader healthcare system.

From an employer perspective, the credential supported by SB 1547 helps address workforce challenges by increasing preparation in applied skills and evidence-based practices, standardizing training to promote consistent readiness across employers, and aligning education with an appropriate scope of practice focused on brief, skills-based interventions.

Importantly, this reduces the need for intensive supervision and remedial training for entry-level workers, allowing more highly trained clinicians to practice at the top of their license.

Taken together, these changes support workforce sustainability, improve service quality, and help behavioral health organizations respond more effectively to growing community need. OCBH appreciates the Legislature's attention to strengthening the behavioral health workforce pipeline and supports Senate Bill 1547.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Heather Jefferis
Executive Director
Oregon Council for Behavioral Health