

Date:	February 3, 2026
To:	Chair Tran, Vice Chairs Lewis & Watanabe, Members of the House Emergency Management and Veterans Committee
From:	Association of Oregon Counties Legislative Affairs Manager Tim Dooley
Subject:	HB 4099 - Support

For the record, my name is Tim Dooley, Legislative Affairs Manager for the Association of Oregon Counties, representing Oregon's county governments. I am here in support of HB 4099. Counties, as frontline service providers, are helping veterans every day. County Veteran Service Officers connect veterans to their earned benefits and counties, as the Local Mental Health Authority, oversee the community mental health programs that operate our mobile crisis services.

AOC applauds this task force concept to integrate veteran specific care into the mobile crisis paradigm and appreciate the bill sponsor for including AOC, county sheriffs, and our VSOs as task force members. We are also appreciative of the charge for the task force to develop a funding mechanism for these services, as the current mobile crisis model has an identified funding gap of \$25.9 million per year.

I do want to raise a note of caution when discussing expanding crisis services – which is workforce. Community Mental Health Programs have a difficult time recruiting and retaining qualified employees in this work. According to the [2024 report](#) required by HB 4092 (2024), there were 54 vacant FTEs statewide in mobile crisis, and only 242 employees, meaning nearly 1 in 5 funded positions was vacant. Statewide, CMHPs identified that they have demand for another 59 positions in just crisis services, but that are unfunded. Adding a requirement for each county to have at least two individuals trained as a crisis response team would require a minimum of 72 individuals trained for this work, likely in addition to their normal crisis response duties and training.

Caring for our veterans is important work and ensuring that veterans in crisis have access to trained responders to help them through that crisis will result in better outcomes for everyone, including avoiding involvement in the criminal justice system. AOC welcomes this proposal and looks forward to the research and ideas this task force can create.

Thank you.

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