

February 5, 2026,

Dear Chair Pham, Vice-Chair Edwards, Vice-Chair Javadi, and Members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health,

As a member of the Oregon Health Authority Policy Academy Team focusing on the 988 & Behavioral Health Crisis System and a member of the Oregon Health Authority Crisis Stabilization Center Workgroup, I am writing in support of the House Bill 4070-1 amendment, specifically the proposed change in Section 11 (3)(b)(D)(e) to replace the word “**assess**” with “**screen**.” This minor but important amendment will help ensure 24/7 access to crisis stabilization centers across both rural and urban communities in Oregon.

By design, crisis stabilization centers aim to “*prevent or ameliorate a behavioral health crisis or reduce acute symptoms of mental illness or substance use disorder, for patients who do not require inpatient treatment*” (ORS 430.627(3)(a)).

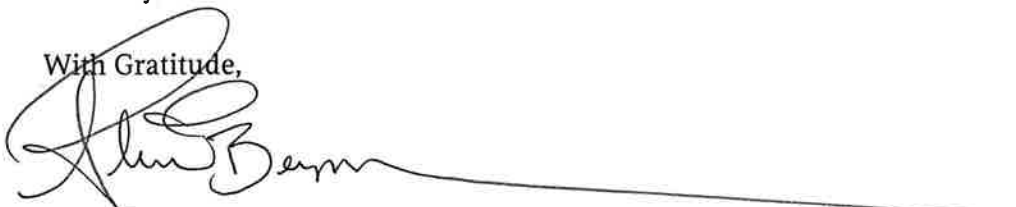
These centers offer a therapeutic and welcoming alternative to emergency departments, jails, or receiving no treatment at all. They strengthen our behavioral health system by reducing strain on high-acuity settings, lowering overall costs, and improving outcomes for individuals and the community.

Changing “assess” to “screen” allows licensed behavioral health staff to identify physical health needs and refer individuals to another facility when necessary. This clarification is essential for OHA to proceed with rulemaking for crisis stabilization centers. Currently, rules cannot be finalized because requiring a full physical assessment could force existing centers to close—an unintended and harmful outcome. Without clear rules, new stabilization centers, including the center being developed in Lane County, are unable to move forward and remain stalled.

OHA and stakeholders have worked extensively to ensure alignment on this issue, and no opposition has been identified. Passing this simple statutory fix will allow stabilization centers statewide to maintain operations, expand services, and increase access to critical behavioral health care.

Thank you for your consideration and for your ongoing commitment to strengthening Oregon’s behavioral health system.

With Gratitude,



Alicia Beymer
Chief Administrative Officer

3333 RiverBend Drive
Springfield, OR 97477