



UNITED WE HEAL

Chair Pham, Vice Chairs Edwards and Javadi, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony today on HB 4069. United We Heal Trust supports the passage of this bill.

United We Heal Oregon is a labor and management training trust that creates sustainable opportunities for career advancement in healthcare through apprenticeship and training programs that are responsive to the needs of clients, patients, workers, and employers.

Oregon has a significant gap to fill in our behavioral health care workforce. 41% for CADCs, 86% for QMHAs, and 93% in QMHPs. Through our apprenticeship programs that create earn while you learn career pathways for new and existing behavioral health professionals, we are working hard to close these gaps. However, while increasing the supply of new professionals is important, we must also focus on retaining our existing professionals.

Most behavioral health care professionals report being overworked and underpaid. They also often face unsafe working conditions. HB 4069 requires behavioral health employers to provide comprehensive, written safety plans for each of their behavioral health facilities. The plan must be specific to each physical worksite, accessible to employees upon hire, and include a plan for lone workers. It also improves reporting timelines and provides a more structured path for employees to report incidents, as well as a timeline for employers to respond to each report.

The goal of this legislation is to ensure that all behavioral health employees are given necessary protections to feel safe in the workplace. We believe that HB 4069 is a step in the right direction, towards safer workplaces for both employees and the clients they serve daily. Frontline workers are consistently asked to do more with less in the current budget landscape. This piece of legislation is a fiscally neutral, commonsense reform, and we hope to see more work on this in the future.

Sincerely,
Debbie Koreski (she/her)
On Behalf of the United We Heal Training Trust