



**HB 4099**

**Task Force on Responding to Veterans in Crisis**

**Dear Chair Manning, Vice Chair Thatcher, Members of the Committee,**

I am writing on behalf of the Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP), representing community mental health programs that are responsible for the behavioral health crisis system in their counties. While our association is neutral on this legislation, we would like to thank the bill sponsors for their work on this issue given the behavioral health challenges faced by veterans in Oregon.

Community mental health programs are required in statute and through contract to provide 24/7 mobile crisis services by two-person teams that are dispatched out into the community by 988 call centers, 911, and county crisis lines. Mobile crisis team members must receive training through the statewide mobile crisis academy, which includes in its curriculum a section on veteran response and a separate specialty veteran response module. Many mobile crisis teams include veterans who are uniquely qualified to respond to veterans in crisis.

Crisis workers have one of the hardest jobs in the public behavioral health system and it is challenging to retain this workforce. We respectfully ask this committee and the task force to engage with the existing crisis system and work with us on building out a more robust response to veterans rather than creating a whole new crisis response system for veterans.

Sincerely,

Cherryl L. Ramirez

Executive Director, AOCMHP