

Expanding the Youth Behavioral Health Workforce



The Problem

The behavioral health needs of youth are overwhelming the capacity of the current behavioral health workforce in Oregon.

Background

Over the past decade, mental health problems in children and adolescents have steadily increased. Rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts and behaviors have risen dramatically in adolescents. According to Mental Health America’s Youth Ranking 2023, Oregon ranks last out of all states, with Oregon youth having higher rates of mental health problems and lower rates of access to behavioral health care.

In February 2022, the Behavioral Health Workforce Report to the Oregon Health Authority detailed the workforce crisis in Oregon. Prominent concerns include the under-representation of people of color

among behavioral health providers and persistent challenges in accessing high-quality, culturally relevant, and affordable behavioral health services.

Addressing this crisis in youth behavioral health requires innovative new approaches to service delivery and systems of care.

Developing Solutions

HB 4151 would create a task force focused on identifying strategies to expand, sustain and diversify the youth behavioral health workforce so we can better meet the needs of our community.



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