



Testimony in support of HB 3046 – Behavioral Health Parity Improvements

February 17, 2021

Dear Chair Sanchez and Members of the House Behavioral Health Committee,

On behalf of the Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP), representing all CMHPs across Oregon, I enthusiastically support HB 3046 as amended, with further revisions needed regarding the NQTL reporting language on pages 3 and 7, and a few other corrections. I am confident that our coalition will be able to reach consensus on these last revisions as we have done on the rest of the bill. We have a common vision that the people we serve and our loved ones will access the behavioral health care they need, regardless of insurance status or where they live.

I have often been asked how the Legislature can improve the behavioral health system with little or no additional investment through State General Funds. Strengthening and fully enforcing Oregon's parity law (for both mental health and substance use disorder treatment) through HB 3046 would have a significant, positive impact on the behavioral health system and reduce reliance on State General Funds to subsidize behavioral health services by: 1) identifying parity non-compliance of certain payers through targeted reporting and auditing mechanisms; 2) making behavioral health parity improvements modeled after California's recently passed parity law revisions, with emphasis on addressing underlying causes and treating serious and persistent mental illness and substance use disorders as chronic conditions, rather than solely focusing on acute and crisis level care, and standardizing benefits covered and medical necessity criteria for all payers, and 3) assuring network adequacy across the state.

This legislation should not negatively impact payers who are already complying with the parity law and contributing to safety net services like 24/7 crisis response and supportive services like case management, skills training and early psychosis programs. The reporting requirements included in this legislation are aligned with recently passed federal parity law revisions.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our vision for improving the behavioral health system and we urge you to support HB 3046.

Sincerely,

Cherryl L. Ramirez
Executive Director, AOCMHP