
Oregon's Efforts to Address Behavioral Health Workforce

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Where we are...

Existing gap

Large gap between the need for services and the capacity of the behavioral health system

Increasing need

During COVID-19 pandemic, the need for behavioral health services increased substantially

Worsening workforce crisis

Pandemic has also taken a toll on the behavioral health workforce

Population impact

The workforce crisis has severe implications for populations needing access to behavioral health services

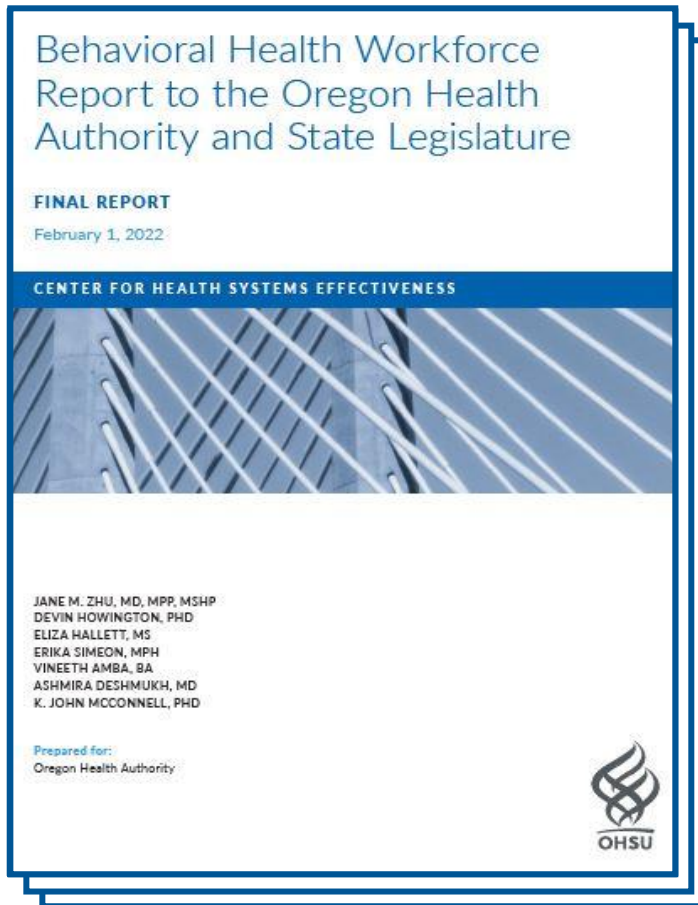
People need providers who understand their community





**LIVED
EXPERIENCE**

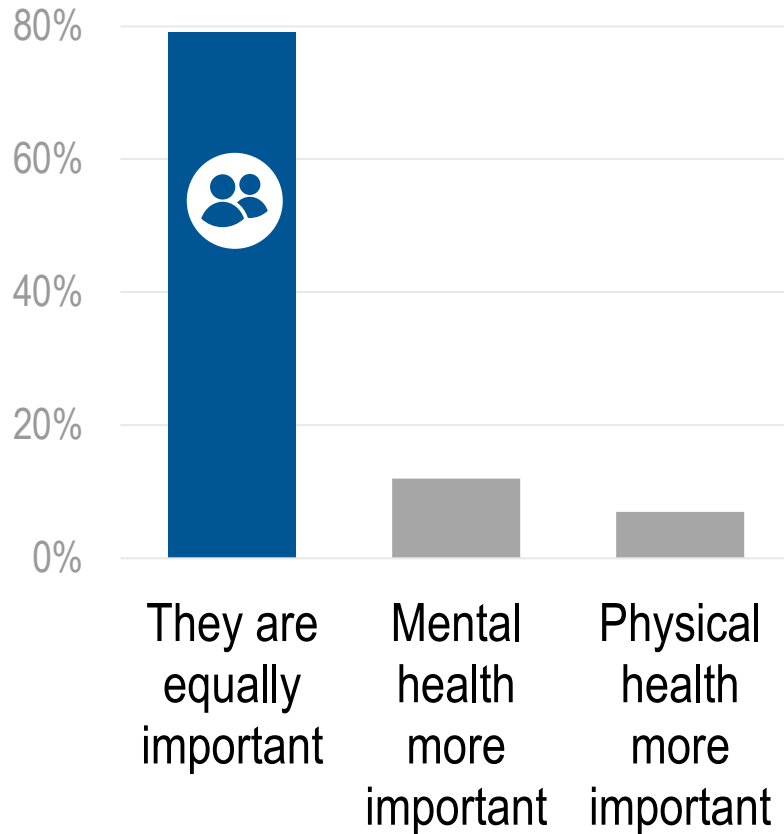
Behavioral Health Wage Study



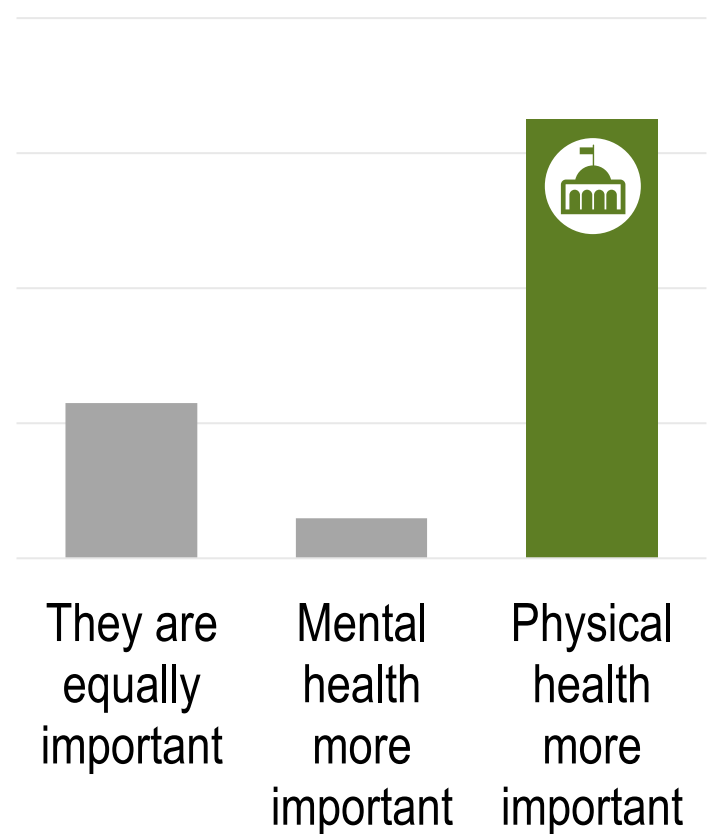
Center for Health System Effectiveness

- Jane M. Zhu, M.D., M.P.P., M.S.H.P.
- Devin Howington, Ph.D.
- Eliza Hallett, M.S.
- Erika Simeon, M.P.H.
- Vineeth Amba, B.A.
- Ashmira Deshmukh, M.D.
- K. John McConnell, Ph.D.

Most people think that physical and mental health are *equally important*...



...but think that **SOCIETY** puts more importance on *physical health*



Source: Survey of adults in Oregon, November 2021, [Oregon Values and Beliefs Center](#)

Stigma & perception that treatment does not work

Low reimbursement

Low wages

Workforce shortage

High caseloads

System complexity

Provider burnout

Harm to people needing services

Equity and redistributing power to the community

Increasing Medicaid BH rates by 30%

\$132 million for raising BH wages

\$80 million for BH WF pipeline and incentives

Addressing dual diagnoses

\$425 million - Ballmer Institute for Children's Behavioral Health

Administration burdens

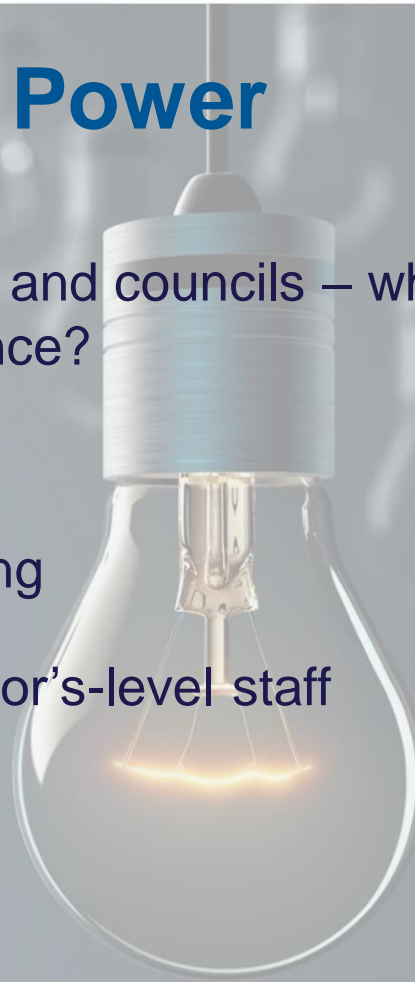
Lack of advancement opportunities

Reducing admin burdens

Behavioral Health Metrics

Equity and Distributing Power

- Review of commissions, committees, and councils – who is involved from the perspective of lived experience?
- Increased participation stipends
- Bring in perspective from the beginning
- Look for ways to utilize peers, Bachelor's-level staff



Reimbursement rates



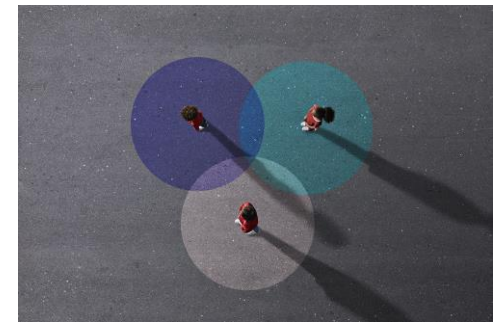
Wages

- HB 4004 (2021) - \$132M for wage increases
- Efforts to address broad workforce increases
- Additional efforts for specific work



Co-occurring needs

- Challenges for service users with co-occurring needs, (e.g., substance use and mental health challenges)
 - Services are usually provided in different settings, by different providers, and via different billing codes
- Generally, for a service, substance use disorder counselors receive reimbursement rates comparable to mental health counselors
- However, data suggest disparities may arise because of the use of different services (i.e., billing codes)
 - Substance use treatment reimbursed 1/3 the rate of mental health therapy



Culturally & Linguistically Specific Services



Workforce burnout



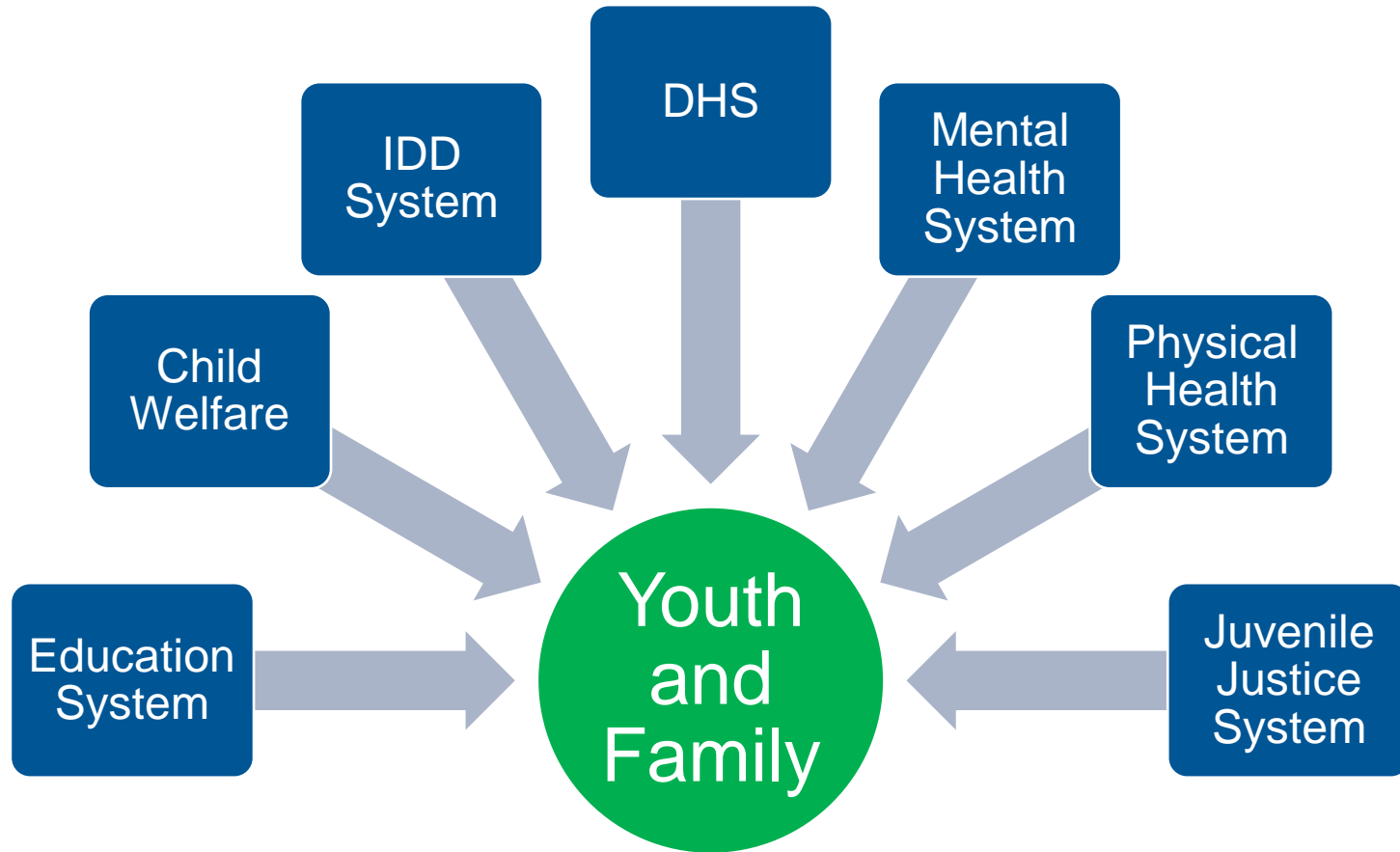
Workforce development and pipeline

HB 2949 (2021) provided \$80M in funds for Behavioral Health workforce

- Clinical supervision grants
- Scholarships
- Student loan repayment
- Child care assistance
- Housing assistance
- Training, professional development, and recruitment and retention bonuses for the peer workforce
- Workforce bonus and housing stipend incentives



System Complexity



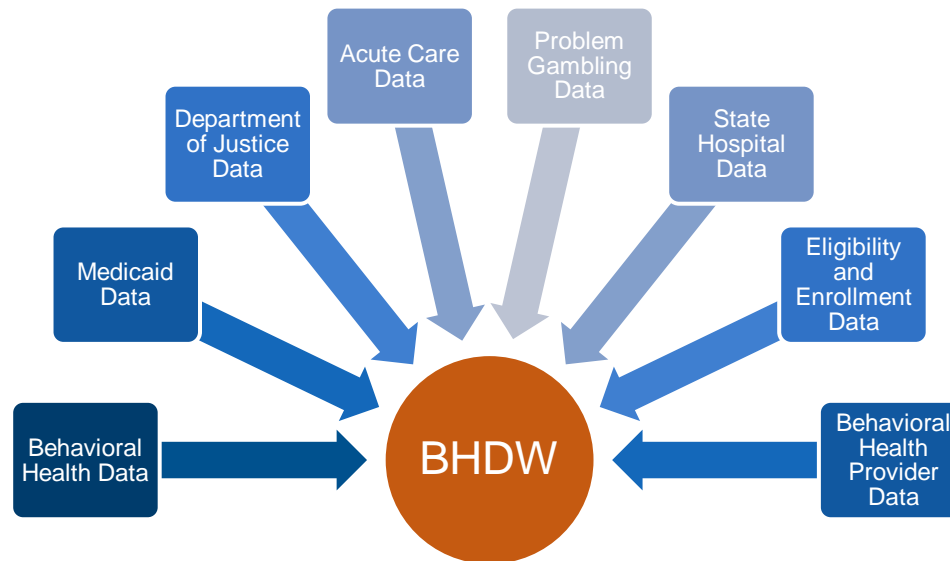
System of Care Advisory Council

- SB 1 (2019) created the System of Care Advisory Council
- Representatives from across the children's spectrum of services
- SB 4 (2021) created an Executive Director; outside other governmental agencies

Behavioral Health Data Warehouse

Central repository for linking behavioral health data across large, siloed technology systems

- Unified data collection and data quality across sources
- Meaningful data connections to increase the value and reusability of data from providers
- Enhanced capabilities for analysis and reporting by OHA on state, federal, and program initiatives



2023 Legislative Session - Proposed

HB 3126

Would provide funds for three pilot hospital programs to prevent youth and families from Emergency Department boarding

SB 820

Would provide funds for development of in-home support services for youth with severe mental health needs

HB 2651

Funds the Behavioral Health Workforce Initiative through the next budget cycle

Resources

Oregon's Behavioral Health Workforce Study (Feb 2022):

<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/ERD/Pages/Government-Relations.aspx>

OHA Behavioral Health Workforce Initiative:

<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/HSD/AMH/Pages/Workforce-Initiative.aspx>

OHA Rate Increases, including Culturally Specific providers:

<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/HSD/OHP/Pages/BH-Rate-Increase.aspx>

THANK YOU!

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