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PRESS RELEASE

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Legislature Invests in New Behavioral Health Housing

SALEM – The Legislature passed funding today to increase the availability of housing and residential treatment beds for individuals with behavioral health disorders.

The new investment, introduced by Senate President Peter Courtney (D-Salem), directs \$100 million to increase the state’s behavioral health housing and residential treatment capacity, helping to prevent individuals with behavioral health disorders from becoming houseless and to alleviate bottleneck issues at the Oregon State Hospital.

“Oregonians struggling with mental illness should not end up in a tent along the road,” said President Courtney. “We have to start dealing with homelessness from a mental health approach. This is a remarkable investment. We can make a difference in a person’s life before they end up in the Oregon State Hospital or on the street.”

“In order to fully support Oregonians with behavioral health challenges, we must fund what I refer to as the three-legged stool: housing, mental health treatment, and substance abuse services. All three need to be strong to fully serve Oregonians,” said Senator Kate Lieber (D-Beaverton), co-chair of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services. “We made significant progress in the areas of treatment and services in 2021, but this investment will balance the last legs of the stool. We are meeting Oregonians where they are, providing safe housing, supportive services and treatment to our most vulnerable friends and neighbors.”

Oregon continues to face a shortage of behavioral health housing, creating barriers for people facing mental illness and substance abuse disorders in accessing support services. This new investment will distribute funds to Community Mental Health Programs (CMHPs) across the state to make it easier for people with behavioral health disorders to remain housed in their communities while accessing support services, without filling beds at the Oregon State Hospital.

The new funding, included in [House Bill 5202](#), will allow CMHPs to:

- Repurpose or build new secure residential treatment facilities, residential treatment homes, and other supported housing;
- Offer supportive services and treatment;
- Provide short-term shelter beds and long-term stable rental assistance, helping to address disparities in housing access faced by people experiencing mental illness and substance abuse disorders; and
- Deliver new outreach and engagement items such as food or clothing to assist houseless individuals with their immediate needs.

“So many people in our state are hurting or in crisis,” said Representative Rob Nosse (D-Portland), chair of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and co-chair of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services. “This funding will give our communities more of the resources they need for people to receive treatment near family and friends. This will help Oregonians get on the path to recovery.”

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