



## PRESS RELEASE HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

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### **Emergency Board Advances Millions in Funding to Support Health Care and Behavioral Health Workforces**

**SALEM, Ore.** - Last Friday, the Legislative Emergency Board took action to fund critical investments to support the retention and recruitment of health care and behavioral health workers across Oregon.

The board approved a \$30 million investment to implement the Oregon Essential Workforce Health Care Program, established through [Senate Bill 800](#) during the 2021 legislative session. Funds will go through the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and will be used to match \$45 million in federal Medicaid revenue for one-time supplemental payments to long-term care employers. In turn, these payments will establish the reserves needed for employers to provide self-insured health care benefits to their employees, making healthcare more affordable and accessible to workers.

“We’re building a health care and behavioral health system where every Oregonian has access to quality care, and a central part of these efforts is making sure workers feel valued and supported,” said [Representative Rob Nosse](#) (D-Portland), chair of the House Committee on Behavioral Health. “We know our workers are facing burnout and staff shortages are impacting Oregonians who need care. We’re committed to investing strategically to leverage federal funding that builds back our health care workforces that were severely impacted by the pandemic.”

The board also approved \$42.5 million for the recruitment and retention of behavioral health workforces across Oregon. The funding, established in House Bill 5202 during the 2022 legislative session, would leverage \$112 million in federal matches to increase Medicaid rates for behavioral health providers by an average of 30%.

“We’re going to see the impacts of these investments for years to come,” said [Senator Kate Lieber](#) (D-Beaverton), who serves as a member of the Senate Committee on Human Services, Mental Health, and Recovery. “Following years of disinvestment and a pandemic that exposed the holes in our system, we’re building back better and stronger.”

In 2021, the Legislature made a [groundbreaking \\$474 million investment](#) in behavioral health systems, including increased capacity in residential facilities, behavioral health clinics, and incentives to increase and diversify Oregon’s behavioral health workforce. Senator Lieber and Representative Nosse crafted and championed the investment package.

Oregon Democrats also led the passage of House Bill 4004 B during the 2022 session to provide over \$130 million in grants to behavioral health providers to use for wage increases, retention bonuses and improvements to working conditions. This came in addition to a \$200 million investment to support workforce needs in key industry sectors, including health care, through Future Ready Oregon (Senate Bill 1545).

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