



## SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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### **Urgently Expanding Drug Treatment in Oregon**

**SALEM, OR** – The Oregon Senate has passed a suite of bills to improve access to behavioral healthcare and take on the drug crisis. Together, [House Bill 4092](#), [House Bill 4151](#), [House Bill 4001](#), and [House Bill 4023](#) will improve Oregon’s behavioral health system by supporting workforce development and retention, improving information and data collection on behavioral health investments, building out the bridge between the justice system and treatment, and reducing barriers to expanding treatment capacity.

#### **Supporting and Sustaining the Behavioral Health Workforce:**

Oregon has [high rates of youth mental health disorders](#), but insufficient workforce to meet the mental health care needs of our youth. HB 4151 requires the [System of Care Advisory Council](#) to convene a subcommittee to increase and sustain the youth behavioral health workforce.

“It’s clear that there are a lot of kids in Oregon who need behavioral health support and can’t get it because of the workforce shortage,” said **Senator Winsvey Campos (D-Aloha)**, who carried the bill on the Senate floor. “The state has more work to do to expand and sustain this critical workforce. HB 4151 gives Oregon the opportunity to approach this effort with the evidence and thoughtfulness it deserves.”

#### **Making Evidenced-Based and Informed Investments in Behavioral Health:**

Oregon’s behavioral health system relies on Community Mental Health Programs (CMHPs) in every county to provide a broad range of services to Oregonians in need. [HB 4092](#) requires the OHA to conduct a study to determine the funding that CMHPs need to complete their work.

“Accurate information about the true costs of services is the key to building an impactful state budget,” said **Senator Elizabeth Steiner (D - NW Portland)**, co-chair of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means. “HB 4092 will allow the legislature to make thoughtful and informed decisions to fund our behavioral health system.”

Across the behavioral health system, [workers and employers have cited](#) high administrative burden as a key factor in turnover and burnout. [HB 4092](#) requires the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to contract with Oregon Council for Behavioral Health (OCBH) to improve outcomes for clients and reduce administrative burden for providers by conducting a study evaluating laws, rules, and contracts impacting behavioral health providers.

### **Building the Bridge Between the Justice System and Treatment**

Many counties and cities across Oregon utilize specialty courts to make connections between people in the Justice System and social services, including Oregonians with mental health and substance use needs.

Specialty Courts provide intensive interventions, with multidisciplinary teams including judges, law enforcement, community corrections, mental health, social work and employment supports. While these courts have been successful in many jurisdictions, data about their processes and outcomes is inconsistent. [HB 4001](#) establishes a Task Force on Specialty Courts to study funding structures, eligibility metrics, and accountability mechanisms for these promising courts.

“Treatment Courts are an evidence-based tool for addressing the intersection of mental health, substance use and the criminal justice system,” said **Senate Majority Leader Kate Lieber (D - Beaverton & SW Portland)**. “I have seen the positive impact they have had in my own community, and this Task Force can help our state get the information we need to make informed decisions about the scalability and replicability of specialty courts across Oregon.”

### **Expanding Treatment Capacity:**

Oregon needs nearly 3,000 additional adult residential mental health and substance use treatment beds to close gaps in our system of care and meet the state’s future demand for treatment. The legislature is making progress to close this gap, with investments from the 2021 and 2022 legislative sessions resulting in over 1000 new beds opening in 2024 and 2025. This session, the Oregon Legislature has invested [\\$85.4 million](#) into increased capacity and new facilities for behavioral health treatment.

However, counties and providers continue to face challenges opening new facilities, including siting and zoning barriers. [HB 4023 A](#) will reduce these siting barriers by allowing supersiting of residential treatment facilities, without requiring a zone change or conditional use permit, if the property is within the urban growth boundary and is owned by a public body.

“Oregon’s addiction and mental health crises demand urgent action,” said **Senator James I. Manning Jr. (D - Eugene & Veneta)**, who carried the bill in the Senate. “HB 4023 allows our local governments to site and build the treatment infrastructure that Oregonians need.”

Taking on the drug crisis and increasing access to mental health care and drug treatment are key components of Senate Democrats’ [Uniting Oregon Agenda](#).

HB 4023 will now return to the House for consideration of Senate amendments. HB 4001, HB 4151, and HB 4092 now head to the Governor for her signature.

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