

# Senate Republican Office

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## **Bi-partisan mental health care bill receives first hearing** *Bill creates framework to bolster Oregon mental health programs*

**Salem, OR** – Senate Democrats and Republicans have been quietly working for several months to craft a plan to boost investment in Oregon’s mental health care and addiction services over a six year period. The product of their work, Senate Bill 823, received a hearing today in the Senate Health Care and Human Services Committee.

“The best Oregon solutions are formed with hard work and equal ownership from both Democrats and Republicans,” said Senator Brian Boquist (R-Dallas), who has worked with Senate President Peter Courtney (D-Salem) on SB 823. “This bill is one of those solutions. It is a roadmap for making key improvements and more effective investments in Oregon’s mental health care system.”

SB 823 expands and develops state programs to give individuals, families, physicians, schools and other health care providers new and improved tools to identify the early signs of mental illness and effectively intervene with support and treatment.

“Our hope is to build a comprehensive, holistic, community-based mental care system that is among the best in the country,” said Boquist. “We have a long way to go, but believe this bill is a big first step in the journey.”

Highlights of the bill include establishing statewide outreach, engagement and education, creating young adult community hubs, peer delivered services and a wide variety of assessment and treatment efforts. The bill seeks to include an array of professional disciplines. The bill also increases funding for alcohol and drug programs, supportive housing, family programs and the development of new help lines. The bill expands county disease prevention programs to include mental health initiatives to increase awareness and decrease the stigma of mental illness.

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