State of Oregon Mental Health Regulatory Agency

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Information Technology Strategic Plan
July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2027

Mental Health Regulatory Agency
Information Technology Strategic Plan

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Agency Information

The Mental Health Regulatory Agency (MHRA), established in 2018, provides administrative oversight for two mental health regulatory boards. MHRA is under the supervision and control of one Executive Director who is responsible for the performance of the duties, functions and powers, and organization of the Agency. The Board of Psychology (BOP) regulates psychologists, and the Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists (BLPCT) regulates licensed professional counselors and licensed marriage and family therapists. The Boards maintain their own separate authority for complaint investigations, regulatory enforcement, establishment and collection of fees, licensing criteria (including education, training, and examination), and practice standards including the adoption of a code of ethics. The Boards meet regularly in alternative months, each maintaining various committees as well. Decisions are made in open public meetings where guests are encouraged to attend. Board operations are funded solely from licensing-related fees and other miscellaneous revenues such as publication sales and civil penalties.

MHRA Vision

Ensure safe and competent mental and behavioral health services for Oregonians.

MHRA Mission

Protect the public from harm by providing administrative and regulatory oversight to two regulated boards that set the standards for and oversee mental and behavioral health professions in the State.

MHRA Values

- Make decisions that are fair and equitable.
- Exemplify accountability, dignity, and inclusion throughout all agency operations.
- Provide prompt and courteous customer service.
- Conduct business with transparency while complying with confidentiality requirements.
- Continuously improve and innovate within minimal resources.

MHRA Equity Statement

The Mental Health Regulatory Agency is dedicated to building and maintaining a culture of inclusiveness. We believe that all forms of diversity—age, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, military status and perspective—create immense value within the agency and helps drive our strong core commitment to public protection. We strive to create a workplace that reflects the stakeholders we serve and where everyone feels empowered to bring their full, authentic selves to work.

Access, advantages, and benefits are not universal, so we must dismantle barriers to ensure that everyone can succeed and is valued and feels like they matter. We believe that all people are worthy simply by existing, and our work aims to show that in words and actions. We ask that all members of our boards, staff, and our community work to uphold these values, together.
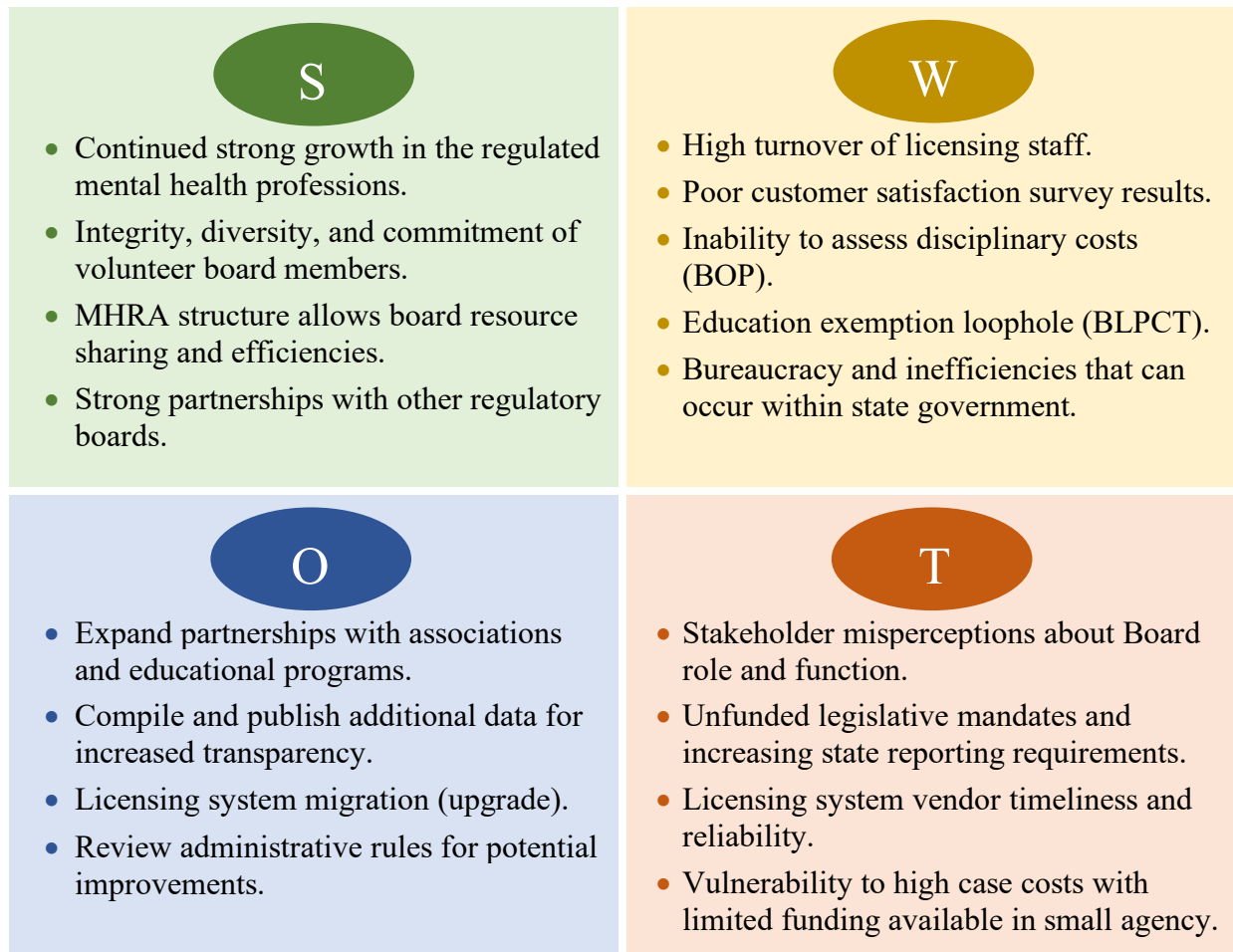
PESTLE Analysis

Examining and planning for external factors (Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological, Legal, and Environmental) is vital in strategic planning. This analysis looks at issues and events that have impact but are largely outside of the control of MHRA.

- Political
  - Expanded insurance coverage for the mental health services will promote growth in the regulated professions.
  - The Boards have experienced political pressure to reduce competency standards, which can stand in contrast with their public protection mandates.

- Economic
  - Higher inflation and property prices have fueled Oregon's homelessness and fentanyl crises, increasing the need for competent mental health services.

- Social
  - Oregon's population has declined slightly over the past two years while the volume of licensed mental health professions has grown.
  - Social stigma associated with seeking and receiving mental health services has declined in the U.S., leading to an increased demand.
  - Increased consumer knowledge in mental health care and social media attention tends to increase patient expectations, leading to increased board complaints.
  - The Boards' investigative and enforcement roles, coupled with confidentiality requirements, lend to public misconception and distrust for regulatory bodies.

- Technological
  - The availability of more customized and comprehensive licensing software solutions is expanding.
  - Secure online therapy platforms have become more available and user-friendly.
  - The growth of artificial intelligence (AI) presents both advancements in healthcare delivery and unique regulatory challenges (e.g. therapy bots).

- Legal
  - Oregon legislators have focused on regulatory boards as a means to address provider shortages and Oregon's mental health crisis.
  - MHRA often faces unexpected and unfunded legislative mandates that strain resources and redirect focus from planned strategic initiatives.

- Environmental
  - The COVID pandemic fast tracked the use of technology for therapy service delivery and shifted thinking around the need for in-person services.

SWOT Analysis

The following chart analyzes MHRA's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

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- Continued strong growth in the regulated mental health professions.
- Integrity, diversity, and commitment of volunteer board members.
- MHRA structure allows board resource sharing and efficiencies.
- Strong partnerships with other regulatory boards.

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- High turnover of licensing staff.
- Poor customer satisfaction survey results.
- Inability to assess disciplinary costs (BOP).
- Education exemption loophole (BLPCT).
- Bureaucracy and inefficiencies that can occur within state government.

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- Expand partnerships with associations and educational programs.
- Compile and publish additional data for increased transparency.
- Licensing system migration (upgrade).
- Review administrative rules for potential improvements.

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- Stakeholder misperceptions about Board role and function.
- Unfunded legislative mandates and increasing state reporting requirements.
- Licensing system vendor timeliness and reliability.
- Vulnerability to high case costs with limited funding available in small agency.

Goals & Objectives

Goal #1: Improve Licensing System Through Migration to New Platform

The Boards rely heavily on their licensing systems, which have significant impact on operational efficiencies and customer satisfaction. These systems include online submission and tracking of applications for licensing, registration, and permits; online investigation requests; internal processing of applications and complaints; license issuance, renewal, and reactivation; contact information changes, continuing education submission and auditing, financial tracking and reporting; information requests; and other important functions. The Board transitioned from its previous system in October 2020 (BLPCT) and April 2021 (BOP) to the Thentia Open Regulate system. Though this has resulted in significant efficiencies, the Boards have faced delays and problems in implementation that have led to complaints and criticism by stakeholders. The vendor now considers Open Regulate to be a legacy system and has limited resources to allocate to maintenance or improvement.

Objectives & Strategies

- Collaborate with EIS Senior Portfolio Manager to determine:
    - Potential enterprise-level partners (other boards/commissions)
    - Landscape/environment relative to potential vendors
    - Procurement strategy
    - Necessary concurrent/follow-on activities (fee reviews, document revisions, etc.)
- Collaborate with partners and EIS to review/confirm/enhance requirements development work accomplished for last implementation
- Collaborate with partners and EIS to execute flawless procurement/implementation:
    - Development of requirements
    - Solicitation
    - Review of Proposals
    - Project award
    - Project Management
    - Project Review and Completion
- Implement continuous improvement strategy through ongoing system review and enhancement.

Action Plan

Planning for the migration to a new licensing system is ongoing, with additional strategy development to commence upon end of the 2025 Legislative Session.

Resource Allocation

MHRA will dedicate available staffing resources needed to accomplish these objectives, possibly through using shared resources among partners (EIS, other boards/commissions). If additional budgetary resources are needed, this will be analyzed and developed as part of a request to the Interim Joint Committee on Ways and Means or Emergency Board during the 2025-26 interim

legislative period, and/or the 2027-29 budget cycle, including fee increase requests as appropriate.

Goal #2: Continuously Improve Agency IT Support Contracts and Services

The Agency relies on a mix of external and internal input for IT support. Internal support includes staff execution of minor website changes, business analyst support, and equipment procurement and inventory. External support includes Department of Administrative Services Shared Information Technology Services (DAS IT) help desk and device/inventory support.

Objectives & Strategies

- Renew the Interagency Agreement for 2025-27 with DAS IT for computer and technology support needs, including:
    - Device setup, including remote work
    - Deployment and configurations of new desktop, laptop, tablet, and printers
    - PC Asset and lifecycle management
    - Workstation moves and transfers
    - Network access and security
    - Staff onboarding
    - Delivery of requested computing devices and IT resources, ready and configured
    - Service desk and field technicians for technical support for users
    - Software and hardware management
    - Installation and upgrades to software applications
    - Patches and hardware upgrades and accessories
- Coordinate with agency staff and DAS IT to identify IT needs and replace or add new hardware and/or software, complete updates, and ensure the security of agency systems.
- Monitor, and update if needed, Agency service agreements with online platform service providers including Zoom and Box.
- Continue to work with the OSCIO to comply with state initiatives and reporting requirements related to IT security and data.

Action Plan

Development work for these objectives began in early 2025, in advance of the July 1, 2025 start of the 2025-27 biennium budget, and are ongoing.

Resource Allocation

MHRA will dedicate available staffing resources needed to accomplish these objectives. Additional budgetary resources beyond those to be identified in Goal #1 (above) are not expected for this Goal #2.

Monitoring and Evaluating

MHRA will begin implementing this Strategic Plan in July of 2025, and the planning lifecycle concludes in June of 2027, to allow this IT strategic plan to be incorporated into the overall MHRA Strategic plan. Progress towards the strategic priorities will be measured as follows, with recognition that many of the goals and objectives are interwoven and build upon one another.

Goal #1: Improve Licensing System Through Migration to New Platform

> MHRA will measure success of the planning and implementation using measurement tools available for project budget and schedule planning and completion. Overall success of the project will be measured using staff and customer feedback and survey results as well as management assessment of overall system performance.

Goal #2: Continuously Improve Agency IT Support Contracts and Services

> MHRA will measure success on an ongoing basis through identifying and mitigating system, service, or equipment failures and outages.

The MHRA Executive Director will manage plan implementation, including resource allocation, and monitor outcomes on an ongoing basis. The regulated Boards will discuss and make decisions as needed regarding plan components as they progress during regular meetings, and review overall IT strategic planning progress and accomplishments during their respective annual strategic planning meetings. Upon incorporating the plan into the overall MHRA Strategic Plan, MHRA leadership will review and update the MHRA strategic plan every three years.