

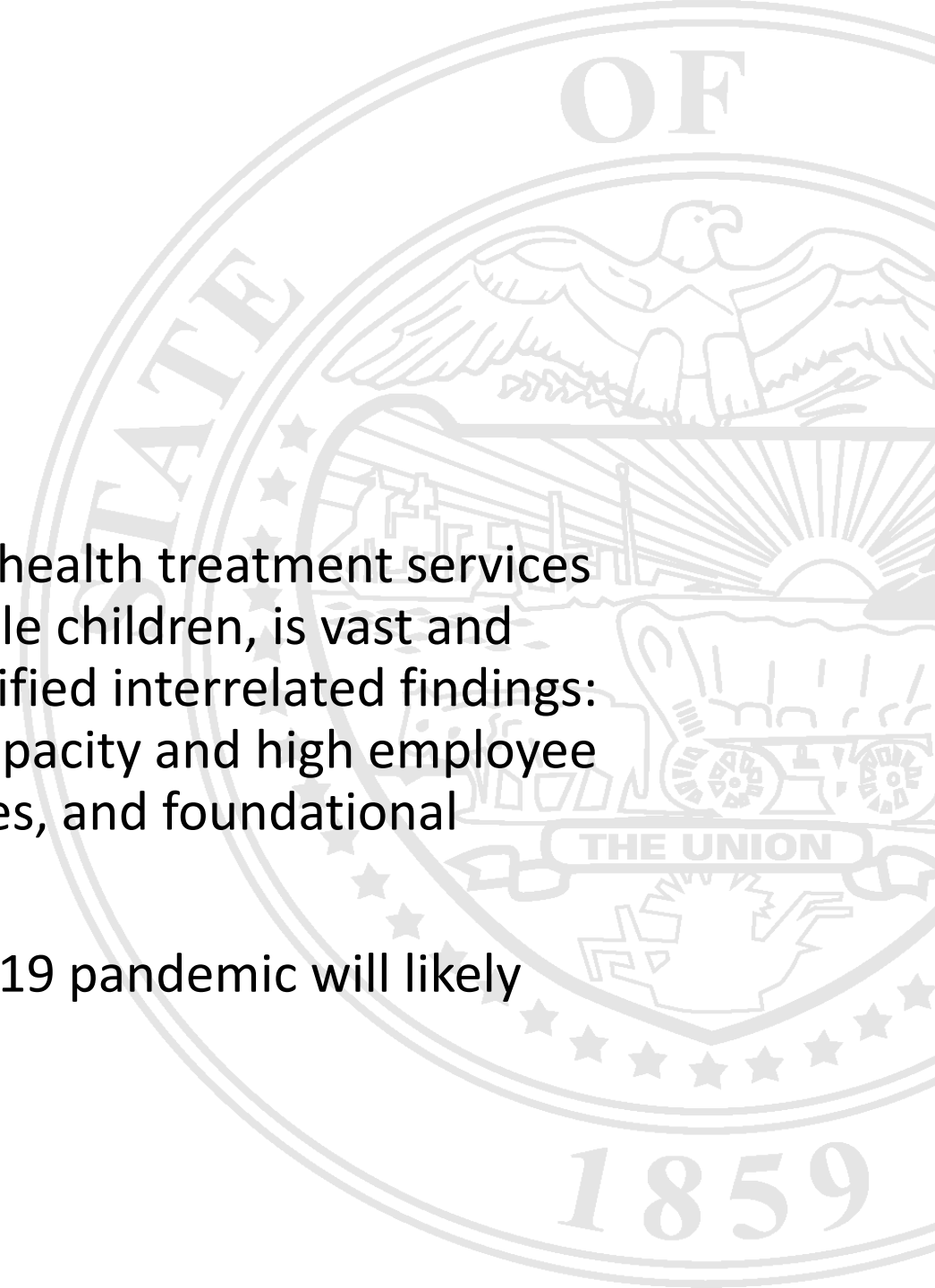
**Oregon Health Authority**  
**Chronic and Systemic Issues in**  
**Oregon's Mental Health**  
**Treatment System Leave Children**  
**and Their Families in Crisis**

Report 2020-32  
October 2020

# Introduction

The state system responsible for delivering mental health treatment services to roughly 1 million Oregonians, including vulnerable children, is vast and made up of numerous stakeholders. Auditors identified interrelated findings: data shortfalls, statutory weaknesses, workforce capacity and high employee turnover challenges, poor county oversight practices, and foundational governance issues.

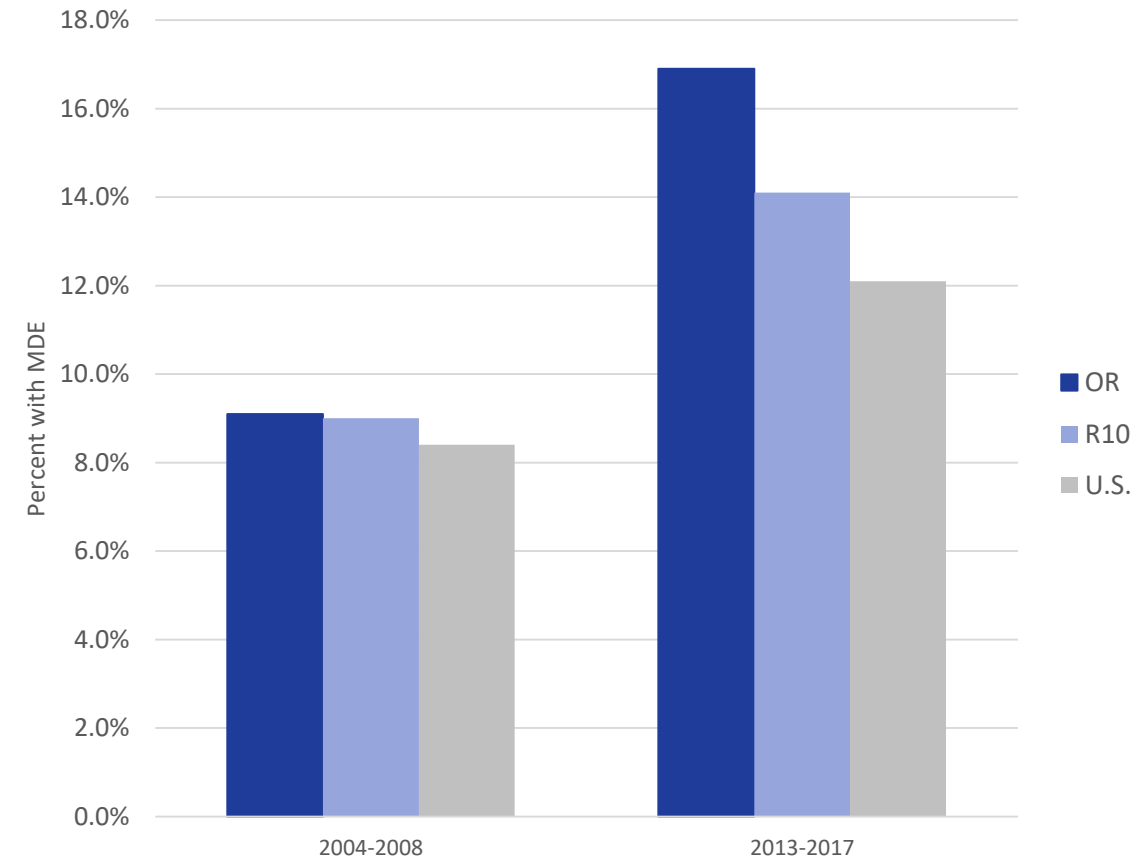
The severe mental health impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic will likely place additional duress on the system.



# Oregon's need for services outpaces its capacity

- Potential COVID-19 related cuts
- Reports detail declines in residential capacity
- State ranks last, or near last, in national ranking
- Oregon outpaces region and country in youth MDE
- Connection with DHS foster care

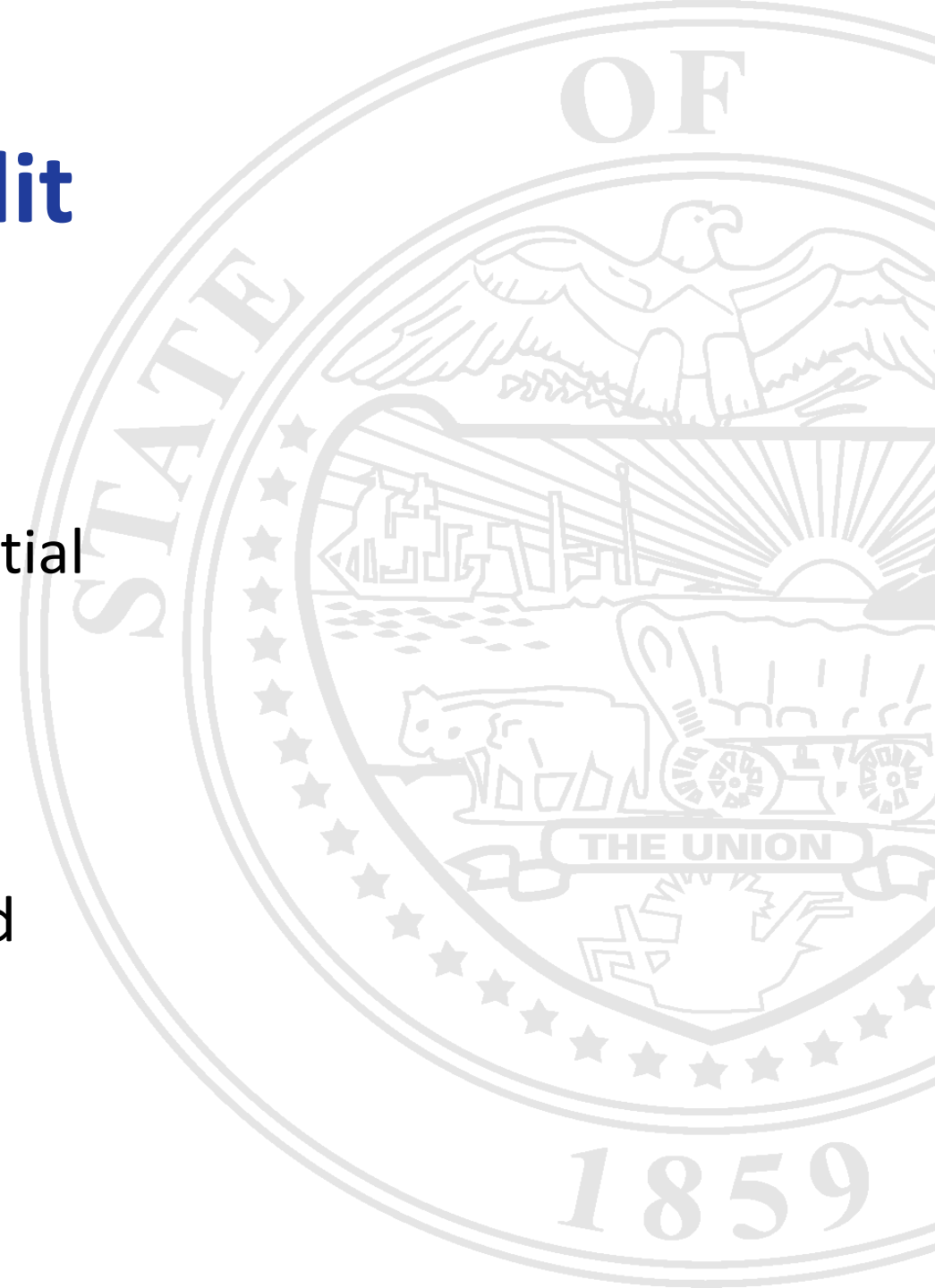
Rate of Oregon youth aged 12 to 17 who suffered from a major depressive episode has outpaced the national and regional rate



Source: SAMHSA Behavioral Health Barometer: Oregon, Volume 5

# How we conducted the audit

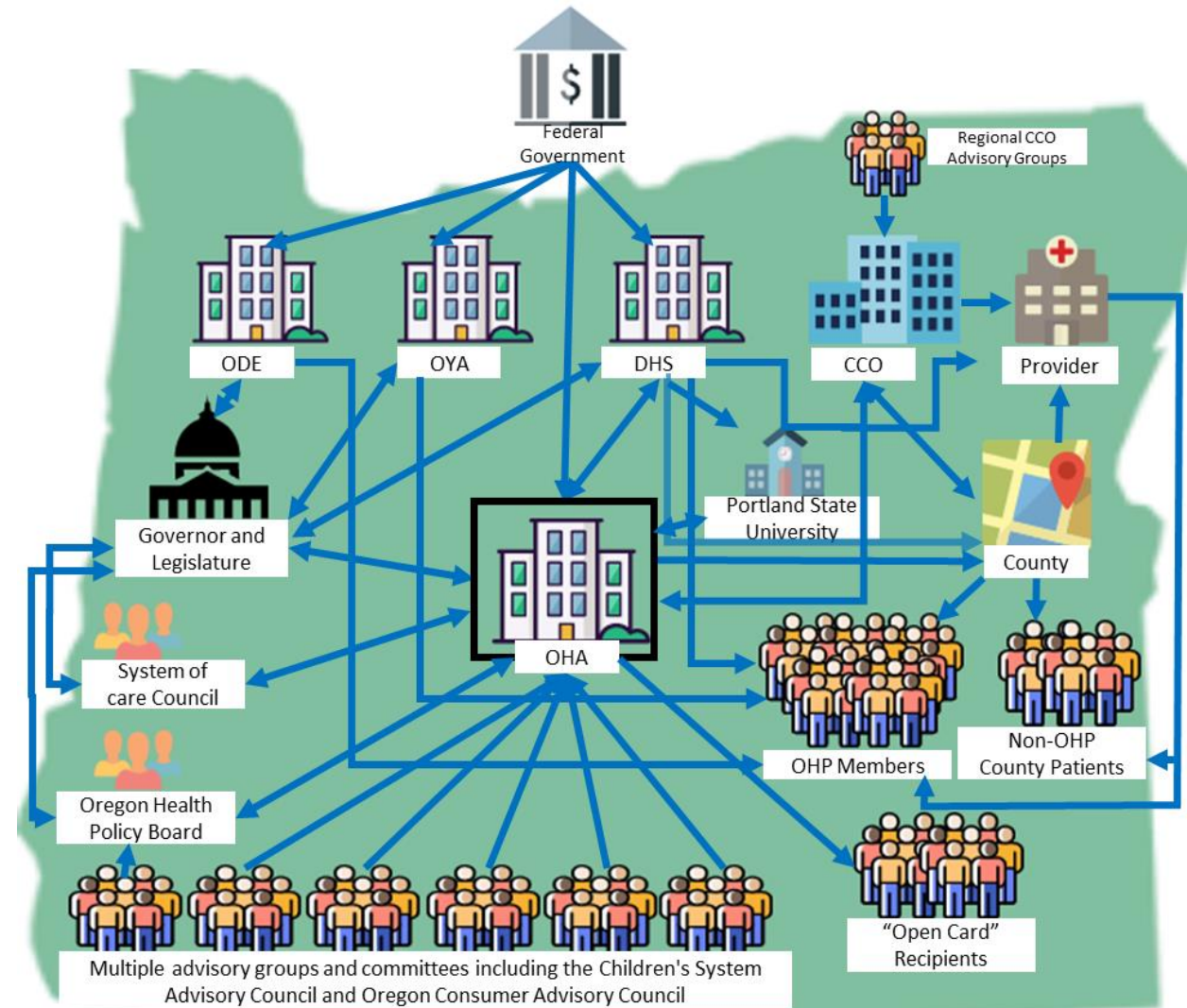
- Conducted interviews with officials, staff, patients, and more
- Performed site visits at psychiatric residential treatment facilities
- Reviewed literature, guidance, laws, documentation, and contracts
- Analyzed Medicaid, capacity, financial, and referral data



# Audit Findings

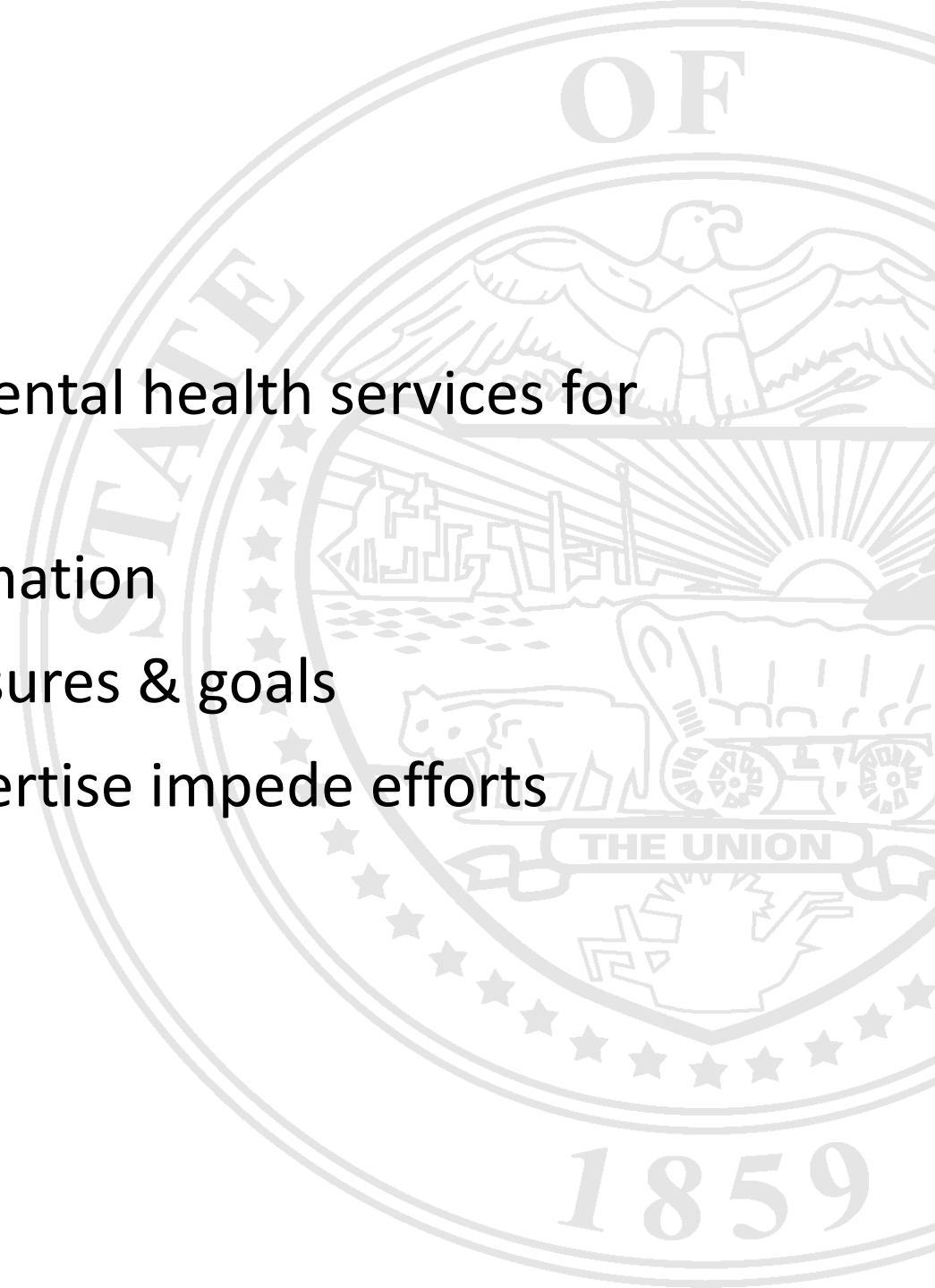
Oregon's fragmented and siloed structure hinders the state from coordinating and effectively addressing mental health challenges faced by Oregonians. This structure exacerbates the findings:

1. Data Shortfalls
2. Statute Challenges
3. Governance
4. Workforce Capacity
5. Accountability



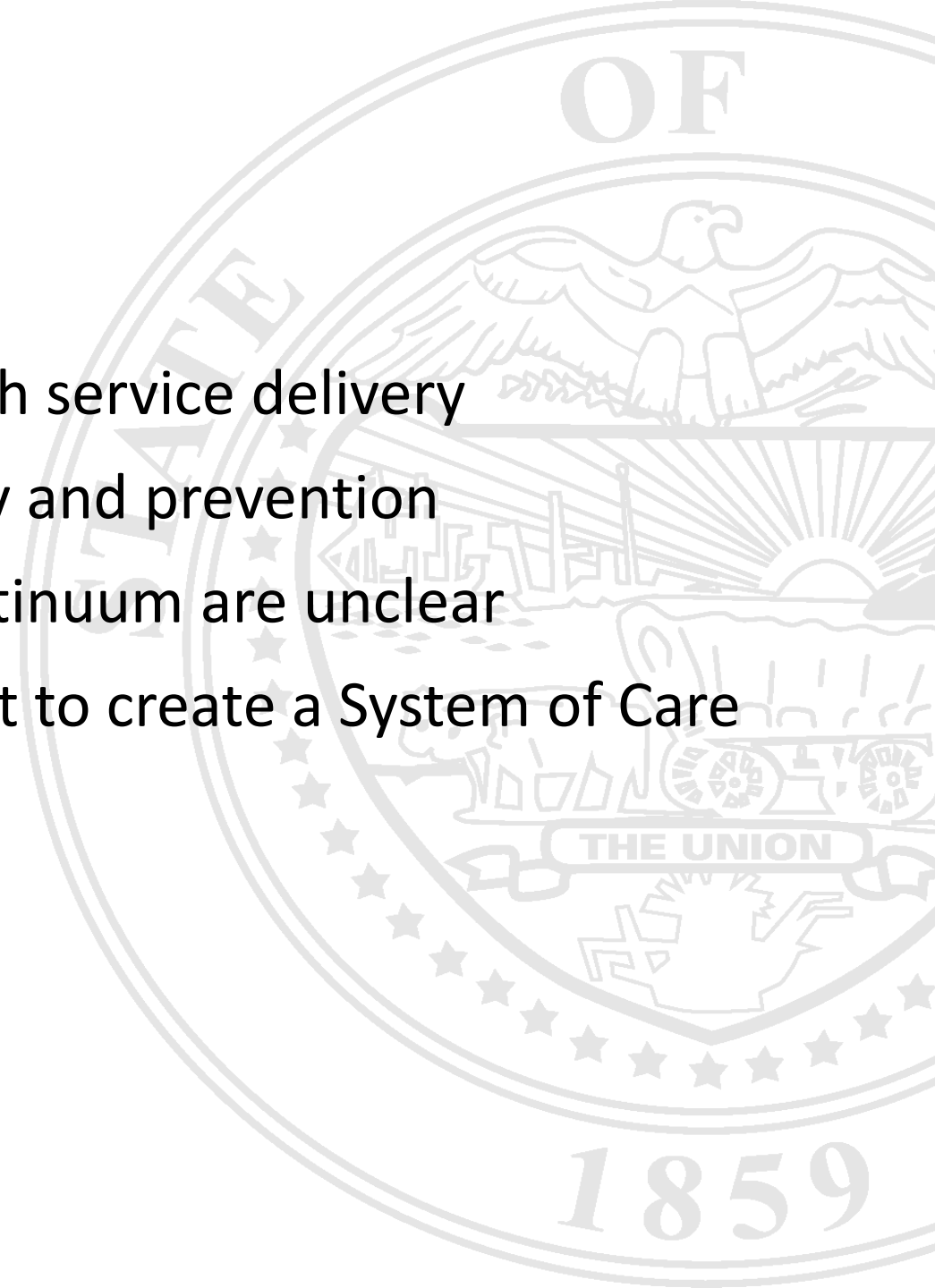
# Data Shortfalls

- OHA lacks basic data for understanding mental health services for children and youth
- Data systems do not contain critical information
- OHA has not identified performance measures & goals
- Limited coordination and lack of data expertise impede efforts



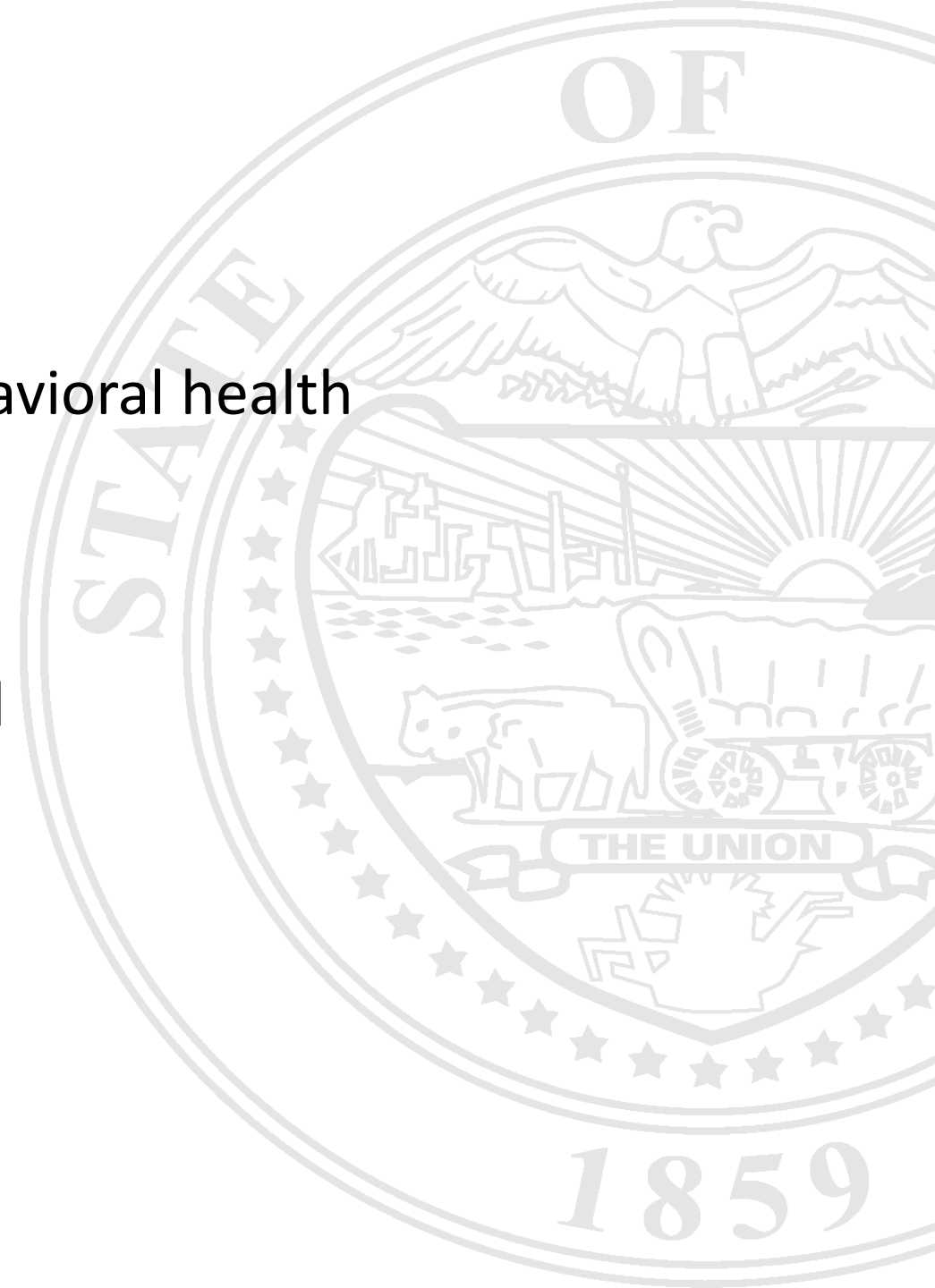
# Statute Challenges

- Statutes do not fully support mental health service delivery
- Key provisions deprioritize service delivery and prevention
- Roles and responsibilities for the care continuum are unclear
- Agencies remain siloed despite 2009 effort to create a System of Care



# Governance

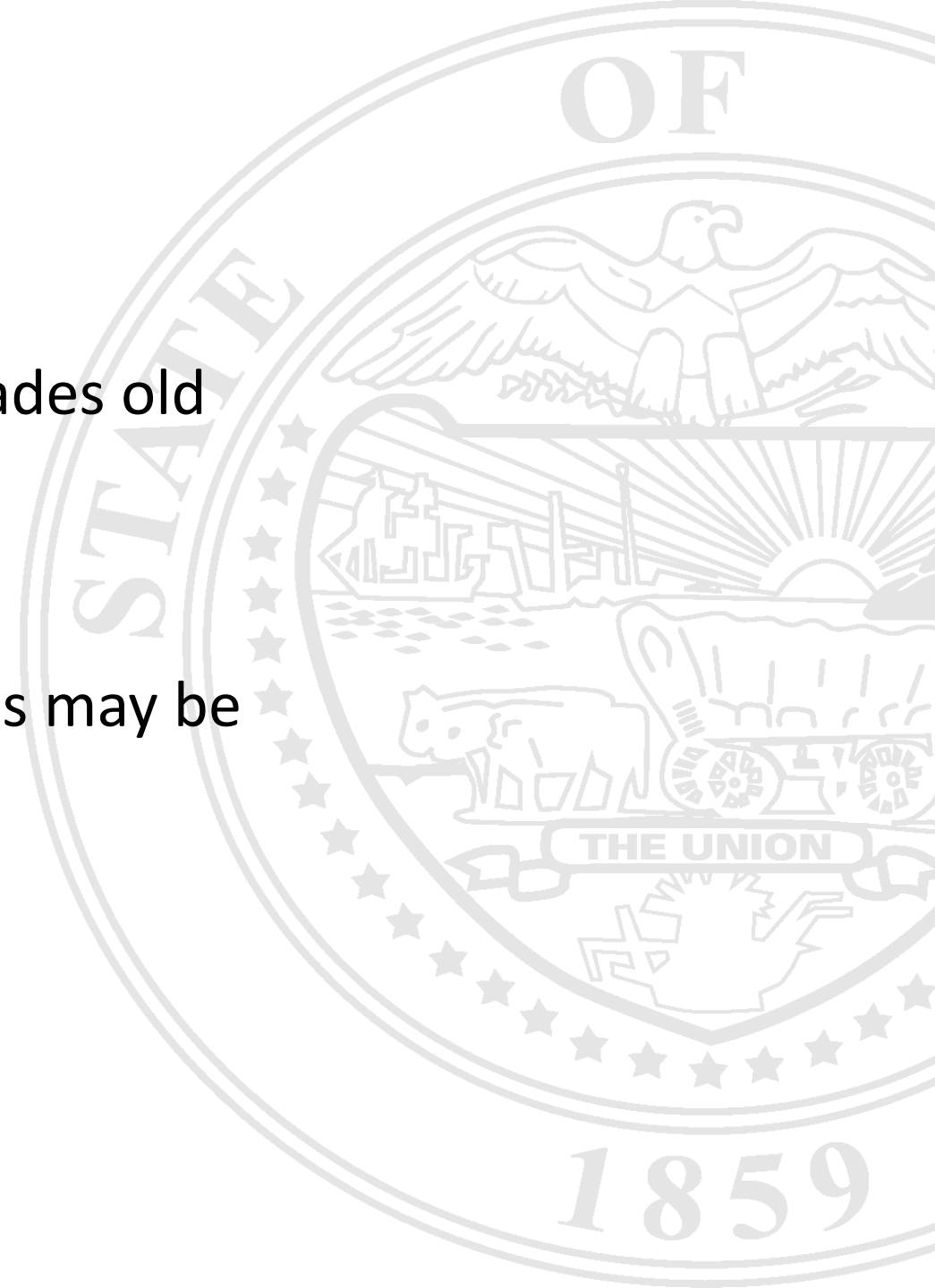
- Oregon has not sustained a vision for behavioral health
- OHA lacks cohesive strategic planning
- Key terms are undefined
- Stakeholder engagement can be improved





# Workforce Capacity

- Behavioral health turnover issues are decades old
- Direct care worker challenges
- Turnover impacts delivery of care
- Workforce recruitment and retention plans may be hindered by COVID-19



# Accountability

- County mental health program funding is not adequately monitored
- Wraparound program outcome reporting and monitoring
- Variability exists in Wraparound experience

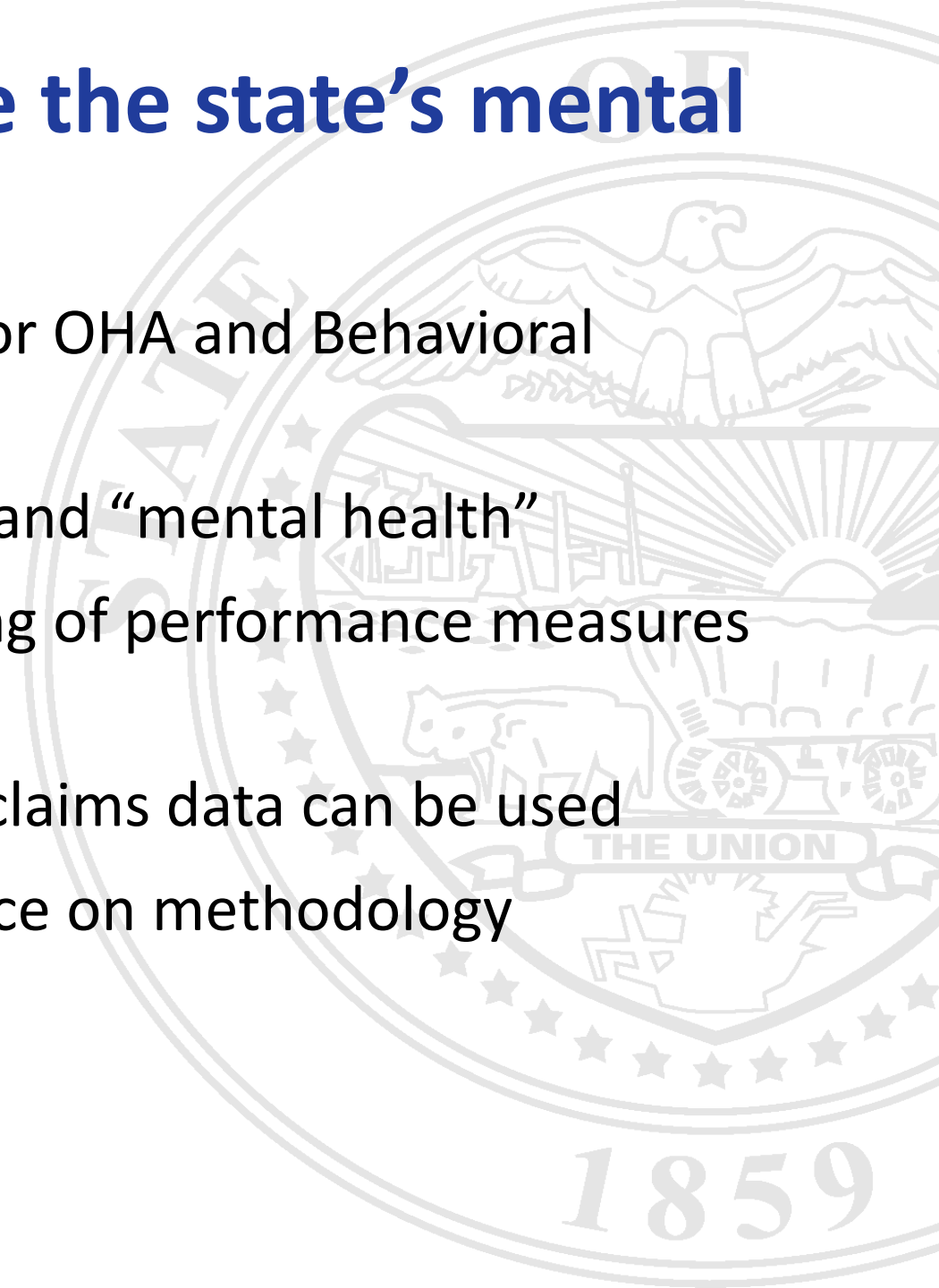
Figure 12: OHA budgeted about \$158 million of General Funds for county Local Mental Health Authorities for the biennium ending June 30, 2019

Program	Mental Health General Fund
Children & Families Local Mental Health Authority	\$14,455,440.40
Adult Program Local Mental Health Authority	\$143,791,677.99
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$158,247,118.39</b>

Source: Oregon Health Authority

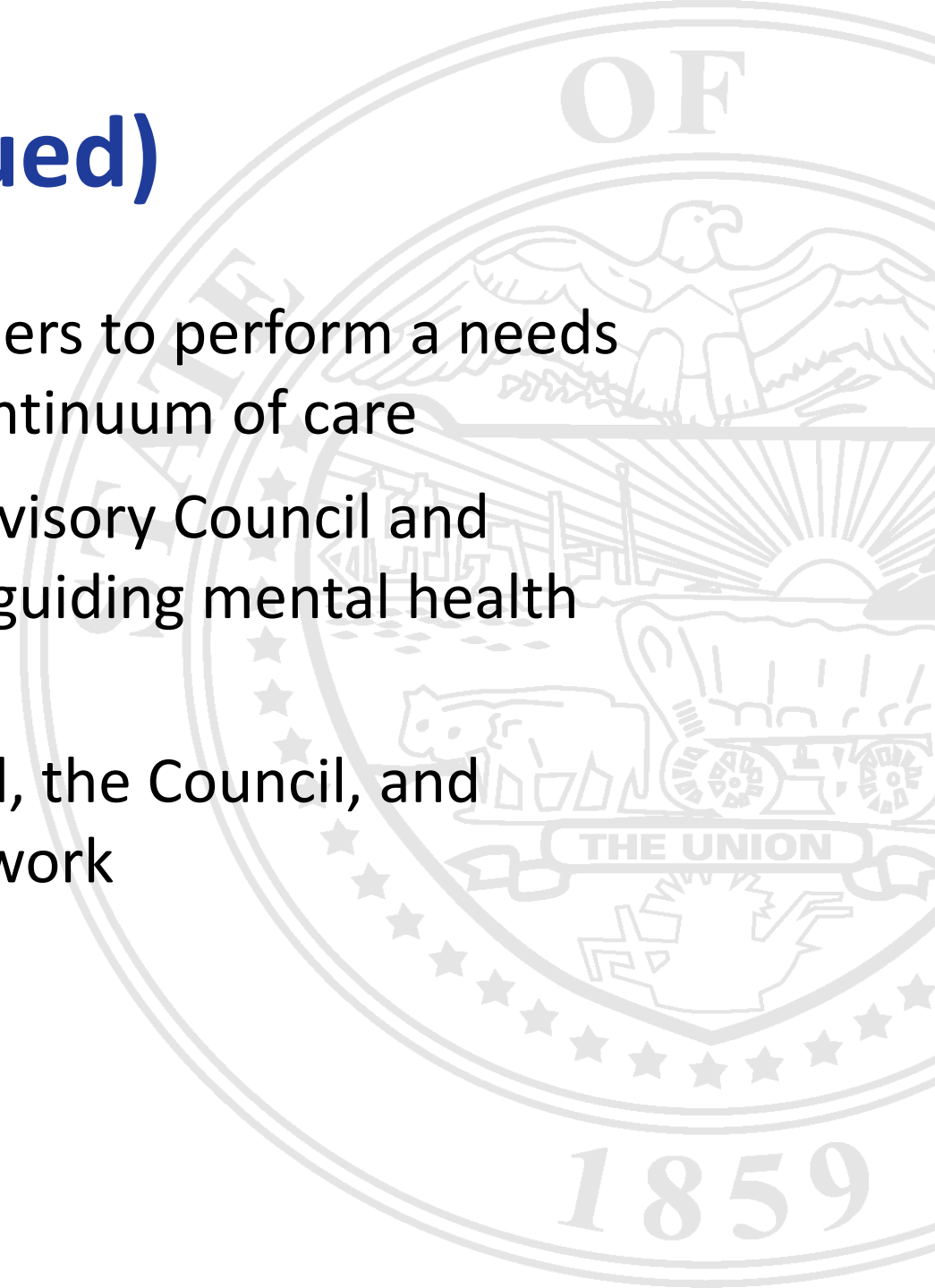
# Recommendations to improve the state's mental health treatment system

- Develop a comprehensive strategic plan for OHA and Behavioral Health Division
- Define necessary terms, such as “health” and “mental health”
- Identify data gaps that prevent the tracking of performance measures and identify the measures
- Determine the extent to which Medicaid claims data can be used
- Develop and communicate shared guidance on methodology



# Recommendations (continued)

- Collaborate with System of Care stakeholders to perform a needs assessment for the children and family continuum of care
- Work with Senate Bill 1 System of Care Advisory Council and Legislature to better optimize the statute guiding mental health treatment services
- Work with the Oregon Health Policy Board, the Council, and Legislature to update the statutory framework



# Questions?

## Audit Team

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