

To; Lane Board of County Commissioners

October 15, 2024

From: Dr. B Grace Bullock

Re: Lane County and PeaceHealth Strategic Partnership to Expand Critical Behavioral Health Services in Lane County

Dear Lane Board of County Commissioners.

I am writing in strong support of PeaceHealth's proposed new Behavioral Health Hospital and campus off International Way in Springfield Oregon.

I have served as Chair of Lane County's Mental Health Advisory/Local Alcohol and Drug Planning Committee for more than 3 years following 3 years as Vice Chair. That experience, combined with more than 25 years as a research psychologist, practitioner, and policy driver in settings including the Oregon Department of Education, University of Oregon, Oregon Research Institute, and Oregon Social Learning Center, has afforded me an in-depth understanding of the state of mental health, substance use, and IDD service delivery in Lane County.

As you are aware, several decades of insufficient investment in Oregon's behavioral health prevention, intervention, and crisis services have led to a system that fails to meet the needs of its residents. Adult [prevalence rates of depression and/or anxiety \(35.3%\)](#), deaths by suicide ([65% greater than the national average](#)), and [unmet needs for counseling or therapy \(32.3%\)](#) are above the national average, and rates of substance use and death are comparable to national figures. The state's funding formula has been insufficient in addressing Lane County's behavioral health service delivery needs, prompting the necessity for innovative partnerships, and creative solutions.

Some of Lane County's greatest unmet needs include a lack of residential and dual diagnosis treatment facilities and crisis stabilization and sobering centers, particularly for communities outside the Interstate 5 corridor. The proposed behavioral health hospital and adjacent stabilization center offer a collaborative solution to reduce the likelihood that individuals experiencing mental health crises will end up in emergency departments, police custody, or perish, and increase the probability that they will receive high-quality care that reduces the burden on the county. Further, a public-private partnership that funds and sustains the behavioral health hospital lessens the County's reliance on fluctuating legislative budgets and ensures continuity of services.

The strategic partnership between Lane County and PeaceHealth and the proposed Behavioral Health Hospital and Lane Stabilization Center holds great promise for our community. I wholeheartedly support this effort and strongly recommend that the Board of County Commissioners vote in favor of this important investment in our county's health and well-being.

Sincerely,



B Grace Bullock, PhD

Chair, Lane County Mental Health, Substance Use and IDD Advisory Council (MHAC)