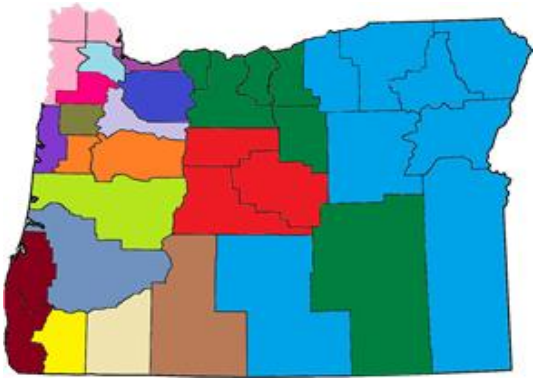
Behavioral Health Initiative For Older Adults and People with Disabilities

Launched in 2015 to meet the needs of older adults and people with physical disabilities by improving timely access to care from qualified providers who work together to provide coordinated, quality and culturally responsive behavioral health and wellness services.

Older Adult Behavioral Health Specialists

The Oregon Health Authority funds and supports 24 Specialists statewide, who are trained in social work or psychology. They **promote collaboration and coordination** among core stakeholders and partners, **provide complex case consultation** for older adults and people with disabilities, and **offer workforce development training to professionals** as well as **community education**. Every county in Oregon is covered by a Behavioral Health Specialist.



What is needed and why

- Oregon's older adult population is aging rapidly and there will be **1 million** adults 65 or older in Oregon by 2030.[1]
- **One quarter** of older adults experienced anxiety and depression since the start of COVID-19.[2]
- **Oregon** has the highest US rate of adults 65 and older hospitalized for opioid-related issues such as overdose, use and dependence.[3]
- Stakeholders across Oregon rate a lack of integration and poor communication between service agencies among the top barriers to supporting older adults and people with physical disabilities.[4]
- Coordination and building partnerships between service agencies and training for professionals and community members are key for supporting this population.[4]

Sources: 1. Oregon Office of Economic Analysis, Demographic Forecast; 2. Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF); 3. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); 4. Portland State University Institute on Aging Behavioral Health Initiative Evaluation.

What do Older Adult Behavioral Health Specialists do?

Collaborate & Coordinate

We work with a range of community partners, from aging and behavioral health service agencies to law enforcement, and faith communities.

We build partnerships and bridge service gaps with our core partners:

- Aging and People with Disabilities
- Coordinated Care Organizations
- Community Mental Health Programs

These stakeholder alliances help overcome barriers between agencies.

Consult on Complex Cases

We provide free complex case consultation in concert with community partners, regardless of insurance coverage, about appropriate referrals, behavioral health, normal aging and other concerns.

We facilitate MDT meetings and other settings for older adults and people with physical disabilities.

These consults help our partners support the behavioral, physical, and social needs of this population.

Training & Education

We are building a qualified workforce that can identify, assess, refer and treat older adults with behavioral health needs.

We provide free training to professionals and community members on a wide range of topics:

- System navigation
- Alzheimer's disease and dementias
- Supporting special populations
- Suicide prevention
- Supporting older adults during COVID-19

Find your local Behavioral Health Specialist and more information on our website:

OregonBHI.org