



UNIVERSITY OF
OREGON

The Ballmer Institute
for Children's Behavioral Health



ANNUAL REPORT

2025

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The 2026 cohort, led by Assistant Professor Evelyn Cho, enjoyed a class session on the University of Oregon Portland's "O Lawn" on a warm spring day.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

This fall marks a major milestone for the Ballmer Institute: for the first time, students are enrolled across all four years of our pioneering child behavioral health undergraduate program. This achievement reflects years of innovation, collaboration, and a shared commitment to reimagining how we prepare bachelor’s-level providers to support youth mental health. Our curriculum—grounded in evidence-based practices and shaped by community voices—blends academic rigor with meaningful, applied experience. Students graduate not only with technical skills, but with the cultural humility and empathy essential for effective care.

Our community partnerships remain central to our training model. These trusted partners have helped shape our curriculum and serve as applied training sites, ensuring students are prepared to deliver inclusive, culturally responsive care. We’re especially proud of our on-campus training site, made possible through our partnership with Lines for Life YouthLine. Together, we transformed an unused room into a fully functioning telehealth space, where students gain experience in peer-to-peer crisis support. This collaboration not only enhances student learning, it also expands access to vital behavioral health services for youth across Oregon.

On the research front, we’ve partnered with Portland-area schools to build capacity for behavioral health screening and prevention. We have helped participating schools integrate critical services in early identification and prevention of behavioral health challenges for students. Our faculty continue to produce impactful research findings that are shaping our knowledge of how best to support youth behavioral health, including partnering with the Prevention Science Institute on an \$11 million grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to launch a

new national center for children’s mental health at the University of Oregon.

These efforts by our committed faculty, staff, and community partners are helping us shape and advance a national model for youth behavioral health. In Oregon, a state-legislated task force has recommended that Oregon create a new license for professionals delivering behavioral health services, which our students would be eligible for after graduation. This recommendation was endorsed by Oregon’s System of Care Advisory Council and will be introduced as legislation in Oregon’s 2026 legislative session. And in a major step forward to creating a new profession that reaches across state lines, Nevada became the first state to adopt our training program and establish a bachelor’s-level credential for these professionals.

As we work to expand the behavioral health workforce, we’re equally committed to supporting those already serving youth in our communities. Through our graduate microcredential program, we’ve taught more than two hundred youth-serving professionals over the past four years to receive training in how to support youth behavioral health at no direct cost to them. This program equips those already working with youth with practical skills and knowledge to better support the mental health and well-being of the young people they serve every day.

We have also deepened our community engagement through several key initiatives. We welcomed nearly

one hundred high school students to our inaugural Behavioral Health Student Visit Day, offering them a glimpse into our child behavioral health program and the University of Oregon. Their passion and reasons for entering the field were inspiring and affirmed the importance of our work. We also joined university leadership in launching *Oregon Rising*, a bold strategic plan that elevates the Ballmer Institute’s role in accelerating the university’s societal impact on the world. In addition, we’ve convened roundtables with educators, clinicians, legislators, and community leaders to explore solutions to the youth behavioral health crisis, ensuring our work remains grounded in the lived experiences and needs of the communities we serve.

Looking ahead, we’re excited to celebrate the graduation of our first cohort this spring and to break ground on our new Child Behavioral Health Building in 2026—a space designed to bring training, service delivery, and research innovation together under one roof.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Your support fuels our mission and helps us build a healthier future for youth in Oregon and beyond.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Katie A. McLaughlin".

Katie A. McLaughlin, PhD
Executive Director
Knight Chair and Professor of Psychology



High school students shared their personal motivations for entering the behavioral health field at the inaugural Behavioral Health Student Visit Day.



MILESTONES



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

INAUGURAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH STUDENT VISIT DAY

This year, the Ballmer Institute proudly hosted its inaugural Behavioral Health Student Visit Day, welcoming approximately one hundred high school students from across Oregon who are studying behavioral health. During their time on campus, students had the opportunity to explore the University of Oregon, engage with the institute, and learn more about the child behavioral health undergraduate program. A highlight of the day was learning students' personal motivations and aspirations that drive their commitment to join the field of behavioral health and make a difference in the lives of young people.



Atika Khurana, director of community engagement and professor, shares self-regulation techniques with Oregon high school students.

OREGON RISING

LEADING THE FIELD: YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Alongside leadership from the University of Oregon, leaders from the College of Education and the Ballmer Institute invited the community to learn about the university's new strategic plan, *Oregon Rising*, and its goal to accelerate the university's impact on the world. As part of this vision, UO aims to lead the field in creating and expanding programs designed to support youth well-being through early detection, prevention, and interventions that promote behavioral and mental health, particularly for underserved communities.

With a first-of-its-kind undergraduate degree and cutting-edge research, the Ballmer Institute is making strides as a national leader in improving youth mental health and helping UO achieve this vision. From a community-based approach that supports underserved populations to practices that can be deployed in schools and beyond, we're making Oregon—and the world—a healthier place to be.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS *PAVE THE WAY* FOR TRAINING

A shared vision for improving child behavioral health

A signature feature of the child behavioral health program is applied practice, where students work directly with youth in schools, health care, and other community settings. To ensure students are prepared to deliver inclusive and culturally responsive care, the Ballmer Institute is co-creating its training model with trusted community partners—organizations with deep roots and long-standing commitments to serving underserved populations in the Portland area.

Many of these partners serve on the institute's Community Advisory Board and have played a vital role in shaping the curriculum and training approach. Their expertise and lived experience have informed everything

from course content to implementation strategies, helping ensure the program reflects the needs and strengths of the communities the institute aims to serve.

In a powerful demonstration of leadership and support, these organizations have also stepped forward as the institute's first training sites, opening their doors to train students.

"The program was intentionally designed to first teach undergraduates specific skills and then provide opportunities to practice those skills before they apply them in a school or other community setting," Director of Clinical Training and Professor Sarah Kate Bearman said. "We are deeply grateful to the 17 partner sites that have welcomed our students and made these training experiences possible."



Executive Director Katie McLaughlin participated in an *Oregon Rising* panel in early 2025.

EXPANDING IMPACT

NEW HOME FOR THE BALLMER INSTITUTE

Breaking ground in 2026, the Child Behavioral Health Building will become the home of the Ballmer Institute, serving as an innovation hub where training, research, and service delivery come together to improve youth mental health in Oregon and beyond.

With \$53 million in state funding already secured, the institute is raising the remaining \$30 million to bring this \$83 million, 54,000-square-foot project to life. This purpose-built facility will feature:

- **Welcoming spaces for children and families** to receive support
- **Modern, state-of-the-art classrooms** and instructional spaces equipped for in-person learning and remote course streaming, expanding access to training across Oregon and beyond
- **A behavioral health clinic** where students will learn how to deliver care and community members can receive free behavioral health services
- **A telehealth center** that will support high-quality student training and enable virtual behavioral health services to youth across the state
- **Collaboration and office spaces** for the Ballmer Institute and Prevention Science Institute



A GROWING COMMUNITY OF FUTURE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

As a new cohort arrives, the institute’s first cohort looks ahead to graduation

This fall, the Ballmer Institute welcomed its second cohort of child behavioral health (CBH) students to the University of Oregon Portland, marking another exciting step in the growth of the program. With both cohorts now on campus, there is a noticeable energy and momentum. Students are connecting across years, sharing insights, and contributing to a vibrant learning environment rooted in collaboration and purpose.

Looking ahead to June 2026, the institute will celebrate a major milestone: the graduation of its first cohort. These students will leave the institute having learned and practiced research-backed techniques in their courses, and then, under supervision.

“There are a lot of different options that we can do with this degree,” Anne Libby, class of 2026, said. “Right now, I’m at an integrated practice site and there’s a possibility that they’ll take me on after graduation as a behavioral health provider there, as an employee and not just an intern. So that’s an option for me,” Libby said.

As they prepare to enter the workforce or pursue advanced study, they will receive personalized support to guide their transition—including career advising, mentorship, and continued engagement with the institute’s network of partners.

 The 2027 cohort arrived on campus in late September.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

SOPHIA MORGAN

HOMETOWN: BELMONT, CALIFORNIA
CHILD BEHAVIORAL HEALTH MAJOR, CLASS OF 2026

The idea of working with middle schoolers was nerve-racking, at first, for Sophia Morgan. But with a little encouragement and support from her clinical supervisor, she was surprised at how quickly she was able to build a connection with students.

“Some of the students don’t have strong connections with the adults in their lives,” Morgan said. “Having someone at school who’s a little bit closer to their age and gets a lot of what they’re talking about, like their favorite music or video games, is really special for them.”

Morgan started her supervised practicum hours in the 2025 winter term—becoming one of the first Ballmer Institute undergraduates to apply her learning and practice in a Portland-area school. Morgan has found that middle schoolers need help figuring out how to manage their feelings and regulate themselves because adolescence is such an emotional and challenging time.

“Even though they’re entering their teenage years, they’re still kids, and they’re struggling with a lot,” she said. “I’ve noticed some of the kids have environmental factors outside of school, like issues in their families or neighborhoods, that add to challenges they may be having in the classroom.”

Adapted from “UO child behavioral health interns are learning by doing,” by Sherri Buri McDonald, OregonNews



BUILDING BRIDGES

EXPANDING BALLMER BOUND PATHWAYS

With all four years of the program now fully launched, the Ballmer Institute is focused on strengthening the student experience in Eugene and helping students better prepare for the transition to Portland. While enthusiasm for the new academic program remains high, students like Kazuki Tanaka, a fourth-year child behavioral health (CBH) student, have shared that the transition from Eugene to Portland can feel daunting.

“Transitioning from Eugene... that was my home. That’s where my family is,” Tanaka said. “It was hard to leave my family, especially because my siblings are going through a lot of big transitions in their life... but I think that being on the Portland campus opened up a lot of different opportunities for me.”

To support this transition, the institute launched the Ballmer Bound Passport Program this fall—offering structured activities for pre-CBH majors in Eugene to help them build early connections with students, faculty, and staff at the institute. These experiences aim to help students develop a sense of belonging and engagement well before they arrive in Portland.

“Being on the Portland campus opened up a lot of different opportunities for me.”

Additionally, with generous donor support, the institute plans to launch a summer internship program, in partnership with University of Oregon Portland, to further strengthen continuity, connection, and professional development along the student journey. The Ballmer Bound Portland Internship Experience, or PIE, offers first- and second-year pre-majors a structured, Portland-based summer experience with youth- and family-serving organizations.

By engaging students in transformative professional development opportunities, students will gain foundational knowledge of the youth behavioral health field early on and help bridge the transition from Eugene to Portland through establishing roots, networks, mentors, and familiarity with the city.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

BEN WHITE

HOMETOWN: PORTLAND, OREGON | GRADUATE MICROCREDENTIAL ALUMNUS
SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER, UNITY CENTER FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Working at the intersection of education and mental health, Ben White was immediately drawn to the Ballmer Institute’s bold approach to addressing the needs of students facing mental health challenges. When White’s district partnered with the institute to offer scholarships for the graduate microcredential, he “knew it was a no-brainer to apply.”

The program’s focus on trauma-informed care, relationship-building, and emotion regulation aligned directly with his work supporting students navigating depression, anxiety, trauma, and behavioral issues. He found the steady flow of current research especially valuable, reflecting that “it strengthened my understanding and my confidence in my day-to-day practices,” from co-regulation strategies to trauma-informed classroom design.

White says the microcredential has deepened his commitment to improving mental health supports across Oregon, noting that “the Ballmer Institute represents an enormous opportunity to truly impact the lives of educators and their students.” He encourages others to complete the program, stating, “You can see yourself, your students and your community through new, compassionate, evidence-based, rational lenses that will change your approach to your day.”



FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

FACULTY AWARDS

Executive Director Katie McLaughlin and Director of Community Engagement and Professor Atika Khurana were honored at the Native American Youth Center (NAYA) 13th Annual Neerchokikoo Powwow in September 2025 for their leadership, community investment, and contributions to strengthen NAYA and the Native American community.

Each received a handcrafted Honoring Necklace made with shells representing community wealth, as demonstrated by the act of giving to others and giving to the community. Its two strands symbolize the connection between the past and an investment in the future.

Photos by James Colhoff Jr., courtesy of NAYA



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
ALEXIS MERCULIEF

As a Pacific Northwesterner and an Unangax (Aleut) tribal member, Alexis Merculief has seen firsthand how Oregon families and children struggle with mental health.

During her time as social worker and education advocate for an Urban Indian Health Program, she witnessed how poverty and historical trauma can create barriers to improving well-being in her community and schools. Initially, Merculief felt discouraged by how long it can take to make lasting change. An elder’s advice helped reshape her perspective: “Change is generational.”

“I am a link in a long chain of people working for the betterment of our community,” Merculief said.

This advice guides her work as an assistant professor at the Ballmer Institute, which she joined in July 2025. Merculief brings a deep understanding of Native American and Indigenous worldviews on child development and mental health and encourages her students to bring their own unique perspectives and values into their work with children and families.

By emphasizing cultural backgrounds and elevating underrepresented voices, Merculief believes the institute is preparing students to support families in helping their children grow and thrive in ways that reflect their values and traditions. And, with its practice-based training in youth-serving organizations, she said, graduates will make an immediate difference for children while contributing to long-term, collective change.

“Our graduates will not only help promote thriving for children who need extra resources in schools or other community settings, they will create ripple effects throughout systems,” Merculief said.



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

ASSISTANT CLINICAL PROFESSOR
PATRICK BELL

As a licensed psychologist with more than 20 years of experience working in hospitals, private practice, schools, and summer camps, Patrick Bell has come to understand that “it takes a village” to improve youth behavioral health.

“We enter the field believing we’ll work one-on-one with children, only to someday understand that meaningful change requires working equally (if not more) with the adults in their lives,” Bell said.

For Bell, an assistant clinical professor who joined the Ballmer Institute in April 2025, lasting change in children and teens comes through engaging the systems around them—and the people within those systems. He encourages his students to look beyond individual behavior to the network of relationships at home and at school that shape a child’s well-being.

This systems-level mindset also drives Bell’s vision to improve access to behavioral health care. By embedding behavioral health supports that are efficient, effective, and easy-to-scale into existing structures, Bell believes we can improve outcomes for children and teens while strengthening the broader systems supporting them.

“Students come to mental health programs excited to be genuine change agents in the lives of children,” Bell said, adding that he’s excited to help them unlock “the potential for remarkable change they possess.”

FACULTY AWARDS

KATIE McLAUGHLIN
NAMED IN TOP 1% OF
RESEARCHERS

Katie McLaughlin, executive director, and Knight Chair and professor, was named a Highly Cited Researcher by Clarivate for the 10th consecutive year, recognizing her exceptional influence in the fields of psychiatry and psychology.

The international Highly Cited Researchers program honors scholars whose work ranks among the top 1% of cited papers in their discipline and publication year within the Web of Science Core Collection over the past decade.

ARIEL WILLIAMSON
NAMED UNIVERSITY OF
OREGON FACULTY STAR

Assistant Professor Ariel Williamson was recognized as a Faculty Star in November 2025 for her contributions to teaching, research, and service to the University of Oregon.

Williamson has shared her expertise widely this year, presenting her sleep study research in grand-rounds presentations at Brown University and Portland Kaiser Permanente, at the 2025 international Associated Professional Sleep Societies annual meeting, and as a keynote speaker at the 2025 University of Kansas Medical Center Developmental and Behavioral Sciences fall conference.

RESEARCH NEWS

GRANT PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR FACULTY PILOT PROJECTS

Over the summer, the University of Oregon received an \$11 million grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to fund a new research center focused on children’s mental health. Housed in the Prevention Science Institute, the ACCESS center brings together faculty and students from the Ballmer Institute and the College of Education. Two faculty members from the Ballmer Institute, Sunhye “Sunny” Bai and Prerna Martin received funds to pilot their projects. Bai’s project, “Linking Organizational and Workforce Capacity in Oregon Schools to Youth Suicide Outcomes,” will examine the benefit of school-based health centers and clinician trainings for reducing suicidal ideation and attempts among Oregon youth. Martin’s project, “Implementing Universal Screening Using a New Behavioral Health Workforce in Schools,” provides capacity for universal screening and early intervention in public middle schools. Child behavioral health students partner in this effort furthering their training in evidence-based screening.

FACULTY ENGAGE YOUTH THROUGH COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Faculty members Sunny Bai, Prerna Martin, and Ariel Williamson were awarded \$60,000 by the Cambia Health Foundation to strengthen youth and family engagement in the ongoing work of the Ballmer Institute. Faculty researchers are actively integrating youth and family voices into program refinement, undergraduate workforce development, and evaluation efforts. This is being done by gathering input from youth served by existing partners, including Portland Public Schools, Latino Network, Native American Youth and Family Center, and REAP. Through this collaborative approach, researchers aim to ensure that Ballmer Institute programs are addressing the most critical gaps in the current youth mental health system and enhancing their impact on the community.



RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
EVELYN CHO

Earlier this year, Assistant Professor Evelyn Cho was awarded the Science of Training Research Seed Grant by the Council of University Directors of Clinical Psychology (CUDCP). With the CUDCP grant, Cho plans to develop a behavioral rehearsal assessment of evidence-based supervision techniques designed to strengthen clinical psychology graduate students’ supervision skills—key competencies that help ensure providers deliver evidence-based practices effectively.

In two studies published this year, Cho and colleagues demonstrated the broad impact of evidence-based treatments. Cho’s findings show that youth from diverse racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds experience comparable improvements when receiving a modular and personalized mental health treatment. Another publication introduced a low-burden suite of adherence measures for providers, youth and caregivers, that assess which providers delivered evidence-based practices for common youth mental health concerns.



RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

DIRECTOR OF CLINICAL TRAINING
AND PROFESSOR

SARAH KATE BEARMAN

At the heart of Director of Clinical Training and Professor Sarah Kate Bearman’s work is a commitment to transforming the quality of and access to mental health care for children, adolescents, and families. Her research bridges science and practice, ensuring that interventions are not only evidence-based but also practical and accessible in the complex settings where most youth receive care.

At the LEAP Lab—the Laboratory for Leveraging Evidence and Advancing Practice for Youth Mental Health Services—Bearman and her team of researchers are completing a five-year randomized controlled effectiveness trial of FIRST. FIRST is a transdiagnostic approach to treatment where clinicians learn efficient, engaging ways to teach children ages five to fifteen and their parents the skills of Feeling Calm, Increasing Motivation, Repairing Thoughts, Solving Problems, and Trying the Opposite (FIRST).

Youth in outpatient mental health care often present with complex, shifting needs, and traditional treatments can struggle to keep pace. As children’s needs evolve, FIRST empowers therapists to adapt treatment. Its principles can be used flexibly and strategically in the treatment of anxiety, post-traumatic stress, depression, misconduct, and other behavioral health problems. In partnering with Harvard University and clinics in Texas and Massachusetts, the trial will not only evaluate FIRST’s effectiveness but also explore how therapist characteristics influence successful implementation.

RESEARCH AWARDS
FISCAL YEAR 25

- Katie McLaughlin**
Executive Director, Knight Chair and Professor

→ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, “The Ballmer Wellness Project”
- Sarah Kate Bearman**
Director of Clinical Training and Professor

→ National Institute of Mental Health, “Testing FIRST in Youth Outpatient Psychotherapy”

→ The Morris L. Lichtenstein, Jr. Foundation, “A Test of the Implementation of ParentCorps in Corpus Christi Independent School District Thriving Together”

→ National Alliance on Mental Illness, “Mental Health Literacy Curriculum”
- Ariel Williamson**
Assistant Professor

→ National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute
“Socio-ecological factors linked to co-occurring early childhood sleep health disparities and developmental outcomes”

BY THE NUMBERS



CREATING NEW APPLIED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Supporters help launch on-campus youth telehealth space

Applied experience is a cornerstone of the child behavioral health program, with students completing more than 700 hours of applied practice as undergraduates. These opportunities extend learning beyond the classroom and into the community.



Thanks to donor support, the Ballmer Institute transformed an underutilized room into a telehealth space—creating a meaningful partnership with Lines for Life YouthLine and expanding training opportunities for students.

YouthLine is a peer-to-peer support service that has provided crisis assistance to youth ages ten to twenty-four across the United States since 2000. Staffed by trained high school and college-aged volunteers under the supervision of experienced clinicians, YouthLine is one of the few peer-led crisis programs in the country.

Child behavioral health students receive 48 hours of special training and practice before staffing YouthLine. This collaboration offers child behavioral health students a critical skill needed to support youth in Oregon and beyond, which students have found challenging but extremely rewarding.

“It’s been providing me with great experience—from active listening and reflecting to crisis response, risk assessment, and safety planning,” Jules Dawson, class of 2026, said. “Personally, it’s also helped me realize that I’m more capable of handling sensitive situations than I thought,” she said.



Child behavioral health student Jules Dawson chats with a middle schooler during her supervised practicum at a local school.

GIVING *WITH IMPACT*

“Being a Ballmer Scholarship recipient is life-changing for me. It’s allowing me to live out my dreams.”

The generosity of supporters has enabled the Ballmer Institute to provide its first two cohorts with the resources they need to excel in the program. In fiscal year 2025, donors contributed more than \$2 million in total philanthropic support—helping fund scholarships and innovative learning experiences, as well as launching initiatives that empower students, faculty, and staff to make a meaningful impact in the field of child behavioral health.

Scholarships supported by philanthropy are ensuring students interested in pursuing the child behavioral health degree are able to do so. Donor support has also been important in providing direct financial support to students who encounter financial barriers while pursuing their degree. For some students, the costs associated with practicum placements, including background checks, site clearances, and travel expenses, can be a financial burden. The Joyce Jessen and Amy Stein Endowment for Student Support alleviates this, expanding access to applied training sites.

“Personally, I wouldn’t be able to financially afford putting myself through these two years here at [the Ballmer Institute],” Esther Paul, class of 2027, said. “Being a Ballmer Scholarship recipient is life-changing for me. It’s allowing me to live out my dreams.”

This year’s gifts also resulted in the establishment of the first named and endowed faculty position at the institute, the Haugland Family Professorship. This professorship enables the institute to recruit and retain leading scholars and practitioners who are advancing the field of behavioral health.

With the help of donor support, the Ballmer Institute is actively shaping the field of children’s behavioral health and building the foundation for a new behavioral health workforce.

GIFTS AND PLEDGES *FISCAL YEAR 25*



\$1M

IN FACULTY SUPPORT



\$500K

FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S INNOVATION FUND



\$300K

IN STUDENT SUPPORT



\$170K

TO SUPPORT MICROCREDENTIAL SCHOLARSHIPS

ADVANCING A NATIONAL MODEL

The Ballmer Institute strives to be a national leader in growing, scaling, and sustaining the next generation of the youth behavioral health workforce through the dissemination of its Child Behavioral Health Training Program.

1 POSITIVE OUTCOMES FROM THE FIRST YEAR OF THE CHILD BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TRAINING PROGRAM

A critical step in establishing the Child Behavioral Health Training Program (CBH-TP) as a national model is demonstrating that it delivers meaningful, measurable benefits for youth and communities the institute serves. With guidance from the Community Advisory Board and National Behavioral Health Advisory Board, the institute has built a strong foundation for evaluating the program's impact. The first phase of program evaluation focuses on assessing and strengthening program implementation, ensuring continuous quality improvement, and demonstrating that undergraduate CBH students can deliver evidence-based interventions with fidelity and effectiveness.

In its first year, CBH students provided individual or small-group skills instruction to 206 elementary- and middle-school-aged youth and whole-class lessons to an additional 195 youth across five public Title I schools serving diverse, underrepresented communities. More than 93 percent of youth and school staff reported satisfaction with CBH student-led services, and 67 percent of youth receiving skills instruction showed improvement in behavioral health symptoms. These early results underscore that the CBH-TP is achieving its intended impact and is well-positioned to expand high-quality, evidence-based behavioral health support for youth across Oregon and beyond.

2 SYSTEM OF CARE ADVISORY COUNCIL APPROVES NEW BACHELOR'S-LEVEL LICENSE RECOMMENDATION

As directed by House Bill 4151 enacted in 2024, the Oregon System of Care Advisory Council (SOCAC) convened a youth behavioral health workforce subcommittee of leaders from around the state to provide recommendations for expanding, sustaining, and diversifying Oregon's youth behavioral health workforce. The subcommittee's key legislative recommendation is for the state to establish a new bachelor's-level license with a scope of practice focused on early identification and prevention of behavioral health challenges. This recommendation was endorsed by the SOCAC in November 2025.

3 NEVADA BECOMES FIRST STATE TO ADOPT CBH TRAINING PROGRAM

In June 2025, the Nevada legislature passed a law allowing bachelor's-level trained behavioral health and wellness practitioners to practice in schools and community settings, becoming the first state to formally adopt the Ballmer Institute's Child Behavioral Health Training Program at state universities and to create a credential to allow graduates to practice.



PARTNERING WITH THE STATE ON NEW LICENSING

New bachelor’s-level license gains momentum in Oregon

Leaders at the Ballmer Institute are actively engaged at the state level, exploring how the child behavioral health training model can strengthen Oregon’s behavioral health system. Job opportunities for bachelor’s-level providers already exist, and a highly trained workforce for these roles is not only needed—it’s welcomed. Despite growing demand, the supply of qualified providers continues to fall short.

Addressing this gap was a central mandate of House Bill 4151, passed in 2024, which called for strategies to expand, sustain, and diversify Oregon’s behavioral health workforce. Following a key legislative recommendation from the System of Care Advisory Council, the institute is preparing for its next major step: the creation of a new license for



In November 2025, community leaders and legislators visited campus to discuss the creation of a new credential.

bachelor’s-level behavioral health providers under the Board of Psychology. This recommendation will be advanced through a bill introduced in the 2026 short legislative session by Senator Lisa Reynolds, a recognized champion for children’s health in Oregon. The proposed license will formally credential bachelor’s-level professionals trained in the early identification and prevention of behavioral health challenges—helping to fill critical gaps in Oregon’s youth behavioral health system and expand access to timely, community-based care.



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF CHILD BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DISSEMINATION

TARA RAINES

For Tara Raines, joining the Ballmer Institute felt like a rare alignment of passion and purpose. Drawn to the institute’s mission, she saw an opportunity to help build a long-needed, innovative approach to children’s behavioral health from the ground up. As the senior director of child behavioral health dissemination, Raines sees herself as a connector and cheerleader, ensuring the institute’s ideas reach classrooms, community agencies, and policymaking spaces nationwide.

Raines envisions the Child Behavioral Health Training Program as the national blueprint for training professionals to support children’s mental health. Looking ahead, she imagines the institute as the nation’s central hub for behavioral health innovation—a thriving network of university, legislative, and community partners working side by side.

“I see a future where child behavioral health is part of the fabric of every classroom and community, and where the Ballmer Institute is the heartbeat keeping that fabric strong,” Raines said.

THANK YOU

TO OUR PARTNERS

We appreciate the dedication of the community partners and leaders who help drive meaningful change in children’s behavioral health. We also send a special thanks to our donors, without whom our vision to build a new behavioral health workforce would not be possible.

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- APANO
- Cascadia Health
- Catholic Community Services
- Disability Rights Oregon
- Elevate Oregon
- Harmony Academy
- Hillsboro Pediatric Clinic
- IRCO
- Lane Education Service District
- Latino Network
- Madrona Recovery
- Metropolitan Pediatrics
- Morrison Child & Family Services
- Multnomah Education Service District
- Native American Youth and Family Center
- New Avenues for Youth
- Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board
- Parkrose School District
- Portland Public Schools
- Preschool for All
- REAP
- Rivercrest Academy
- Self Enhancement, Inc.
- Trillium Family Services
- Washougal School District
- YouthLine

NATIONAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY

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- Sharon Hoover, PhD, Professor, School of Medicine, Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, University of Maryland
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- Elizabeth McCauley, PhD, Professor, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, University of Washington
- Vikram Patel, PhD, Paul Farmer Professor and Chair of Global Health and Social Medicine, Harvard Medical School
- Wendy Reinke, PhD, Curators’ Distinguished Professor, Educational, School & Counseling Psychology, University of Missouri
- John Weisz, PhD, Henry Ford II Professor of the Social Sciences, Harvard University

COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

- Johnell Bell, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Espousal Strategies
- Lindsey Capps, Director for Federal Relations, Oregon Health and Science University
- Colleen Carey, Advocate, Disability Rights Oregon
- Allyssa Casad, Licensed Clinical Social Worker
- Karanja Crews, Executive Director, Teaching with Purpose
- Tony DeFalco, Executive Director, Latino Network
- Keith Dempsey, Owner, Dr. Keith Dempsey Counseling & Consulting
- Nick Gallo, Chief Executive Officer, Morrison Child & Family Services
- Daniel Guilfoyle, Youth and Education Services Director, Native American Youth Center
- Tony Hopson Sr., Founder, Self Enhancement, Inc.
- Mark Jackson, Founder, REAP
- Donell Morgan, Executive Director, Elevate Oregon
- Lee Po Cha, Executive Director, IRCO
- Sean Suib, Executive Director, New Avenues for Youth
- Xuannha Truong Vo (Nha), Community Health Manager, APANO
- Jamie Vandergon, Chief Executive Officer, Trillium Family Services
- John Washington, Chief Executive Officer, Flossin Media
- Birdie Wermy, Behavioral Health Project Manager, Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board
- Karmin Williams, Director of Community Schools, Portland Public Schools

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