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Testimony in support of Senior Farm Direct Nutrition Program
Senate Health Care, Human Services, and Rural Health Policy Committee

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Kaiser Permanente has a 65-year history and mission of improving the health of not only our members, but the communities we serve. As a nonprofit health plan with no shareholders, we make investments in our communities. As a prevention driven health care organization we advocate for improved access to healthy food for all Oregonians. Expanding the Senior Farm Direct Nutrition Program is a wise investment in the health of one of our most vulnerable populations.

All Oregonians should have the opportunity to make the choices that allow them to live a long, healthy life, regardless of their income and age. Voting yes on SB 1567 allows more seniors to access the healthy food they need to thrive.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are vital to good health. Fruits and vegetables contain essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber that promote health and protect from disease. Research suggests that participation in the Senior Farm Direct Nutrition Program is associated with healthy eating habits. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, people who consume the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables are less likely to suffer from heart disease, diabetes and many forms of cancer.

Reducing disease means greater quality of life for seniors as well as reduced health care costs. Since many eligible participants benefit from Medicaid and other government services, the potential cost savings for all Oregonians are significant.

In these challenging economic times we must continue to create the community in which we want to live. That means taking care of the most vulnerable with proven programs that promote health and well being. Kaiser Permanente supports SB 1567 to increase access to healthy food for more seniors and we urge you to do the same.