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To Madame Chair, Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson
Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 717 which will be presented on April 1, 2013. I regret that I am unable to be present for this hearing to voice my strong support for this important legislation. Please accept this written letter as testimony for this critical and timely work.

Over the last six months I have participated in the development of this legislation as a medical expert on the Task Force. I am a full time medical oncologist that focuses my entire practice on the medical treatment of breast cancer: advanced, early stage, and also prevention. I see women with early stage disease, just at the time of diagnosis through their entire treatment and beyond. In addition I care for women who have stage four, metastatic, incurable disease and assist them in their battle to either fight and extend life or, eventually, die with dignity and comfort with new goals in place.

Finally I am the medical director of our developing "high risk clinic" at the Providence Cancer Center which seeks to identify women at high risk for future development of breast cancer and offer them preventative and early detection strategies. While these fortunate women will receive the latest information on screening, dietary advances, medical prevention and of course biannual breast exams by skilled physicians and practitioners, there are thousands of Oregonians who will not be seen at a dedicated 'high risk clinic' and get that same attention to early detection. There are even more Oregonians who are not 'high risk' at all and will get breast cancer as this disease usually does NOT follow predictable patterns. For all of these Oregonians a thorough, accurate and comprehensive breast exam is a critical component to early detection and improved survival. Mammograms save lives and so do breast exams.

I hope this message has come through clearly today.

As a recent graduate of medical training (5 years practicing) I can say that good training is absolutely critical for successful practitioners in our state. Good training is not ubiquitous and our attention to this issue could not be more relevant. As the number one cancer in women in the country and the world we must tackle early detection at every avenue we can. Medical training is more diversified than ever and I firmly believe that practitioners want to be the best they can and simply need more opportunity. This legislation aims to address this unmet need.

I strongly support the passage of this legislation. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Alison K. Conlin, MD, MPH
Medical Oncologist
Breast Cancer Program Director
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