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TO: House Health Care Committee

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DATE: March 15, 2013

SUBJECT: Written Testimony on HB 2997

Dear Chair Greenlick and members of the committee,

We would like to thank Vice-Chair Keny-Guyer, Representative Parish, and the members of the interim workgroup for their continued efforts to make Oregon a safer place for mothers and babies to experience childbirth.

Oregon Health & Science University supports the goals of HB 2997 to bring the practice of direct entry midwifery under mandatory licensure and regulation by the State Board of Direct Entry Midwifery. Although most women give birth normally, there are risks to childbirth that require the presence of a qualified attendant. OHSU supports a mandatory requirement that all those who practice direct entry midwifery in Oregon be licensed and regulated to ensure an acceptable standard of care.

Although HB 2997 is not mandatory licensure, it is an important step toward improving the safety of Oregon's communities. By increasing licensure requirements, HB 2997 will allow for the establishment of core standards and a mechanism for oversight of direct entry midwifery that is more consistent with the regulations governing health care professions in Oregon. With an exemption, it is important that a direct entry midwife be a member of the religious or cultural community of which the exemption is claimed for.

We understand and support the right of a pregnant woman to deliver her infant where and with whom she chooses; however, it is vital that such a decision be made with as much information as possible. Increasing the requirements for informed consent when a direct entry midwife is not licensed by the state will ensure that an expectant mother has a clear understanding of her options for pregnancy care. OHSU supports the Oregon Medical Association's amendments that informed consent requirements in HB 2997 be a requirement of all unlicensed direct entry midwives in Oregon.

Oregon Health & Science University supports HB 2997 because it is an important step toward ensuring that those who are attending childbirth in Oregon are providing safe care and that parents are informed about their decisions when choosing a birth plan.