



February 3, 2014

The Honorable Sara Gelser  
Chair, House Committee on Education  
State Capital  
Salem, Oregon

Re: HB 4009 - establishes account in state school fund

Dear Chair Gelser and Members of the Committee:

Providence Health and Services, as well as the families and children of the Center for Medically Fragile Children, would like to extend our strong support for House Bill 4009. The Providence Child Center has been caring for Oregon's most vulnerable children for over 60 years. We are rooted in the commitment to promote the inherent dignity of all children by providing each child in our care the opportunity to achieve his or her potential and the highest quality of life in an atmosphere of acceptance and love.

The Providence Child Center is not only a leading facility in the United States for the care of medically fragile children, but is an educational leader where families, doctors and caregivers learn about and exchange new approaches for supporting children, in living as full a life as possible. We are the only pediatric skilled nursing facility in the Pacific Northwest, providing 24-hour long-term, short-term, respite and end-of-life care to medically fragile children and young people with profound disabilities and complex medical needs. Our center has a maximum capacity of 58 children and young adults. The families with children who live and receive full time care at the center have access to an interdisciplinary team of amazing doctors, nurses, specialists and the many volunteers. These teams monitor symptoms, administer medications and provide leading-edge therapies. Parents receive information and support to understand their child's complex medical needs.

Over the years, the Providence Child Center has been fortunate to have a strong partnership with Portland Public Schools to ensure access to quality education services for the children in our care. Many of our kids go to school every day, which provides them access to an education, but also the important social opportunity to attend school. Some of our students, either due to medical constraints or parental concerns, receive services at the Child Center as provided, again, in partnership with Portland Public Schools. The importance of the education services to our children cannot be understated – it is critical to providing our kids as normal a childhood as possible.

Last year, PPS discovered a gap in the law concerning residency that threatened the opportunity for all of our children to continue to receive education services through the district. Our families were quite concerned about the impact this would have on the continuity of their child's education and way of life. We appreciated the 2013 interim solution and today, we are pleased to support HB 4009, developed through a collaborative process in the interim, which

provides long-term certainty for how education services will be provided for children at the Providence Child Center.

Providence Health and Services, and the families and children of the Providence Child Center, thanks the team at Portland Public Schools, the Oregon Department of Education, the Department of Human Services and Rep. Gelser for working together to find a solution which meets the needs of each entity.

Sincerely,

Pat Budo  
Operations administrator, Providence Child Center  
Providence Health & Services - Oregon