

March of Dimes Foundation

Greater Oregon Chapter  
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Elizabeth Joscelyn  
State Director

Chair Greenlick and Committee members:

On behalf of the March of Dimes Foundation, Greater Oregon Chapter, I would like to voice our support of HB 2600, a bill to protect the continuation of group health insurance coverage for employees when they take authorized family leave under the Oregon Family Medical Leave Act on the same terms as if he or she had continued to work. HB 2600 would close the gaps between the Oregon Family Medical Leave Act and the federal Family Medical Leave Act.

The mission of the March of Dimes is to improve the health of newborns by preventing birth defects, preterm birth and infant mortality. Our programs range in focus from improving the health of pregnant women through access to quality and continuous prenatal care to advocating for health insurance coverage for all children, with a special emphasis on children with special health care needs.

Continuous group health care coverage can prevent needless coverage disruptions and can promote more reliable access to prevention and primary health care services, which in turn can lead to better health outcomes for women and children. Health insurance coverage affects how people use health care services.

In general, individuals without health insurance report poorer health status than those with health insurance and are more likely to delay or forgo needed health care services. Pregnant women without health insurance coverage receive fewer prenatal care services and report greater difficulty obtaining needed care an Institute of Medicine study concluded. Health insurance status is the single most important influence in determining whether health care is accessible to children when they need it, according to another Institute of Medicine study.

For these reasons March of Dimes Foundation asks you to support passage of HB 2600 to preserve group health insurance coverage on the same terms when an employee takes authorized Oregon Family Medical Leave as when that employee is not on Oregon Family Medical Leave.

Respectfully,

Joanne Rogovoy  
State Director of Program Services and Government Affairs  
Greater Oregon Chapter  
March of Dimes Foundation

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