

**SB 213: Early Learning Hubs**

**Senate Human Services and Early Childhood Committee**

March 9, 2015

Dear Chair Sara Gelser, Vice Chair Olsen and Members of the Committee,

For the record, I am Linda Watson, serving as Community Advisory Council Coordinator for Grant County, Eastern Oregon CCO. I am submitting testimony in support of SB 213. SB 213 makes the Early Learning Hubs permanent and continues the work local communities have undertaken to align early learning systems, support thriving families and ensure children are ready to succeed in kindergarten.

Healthy children and families are the cornerstone of a healthy society. Research is clear that investing early makes a tremendous impact on later life, not just in education, but in health as well.

The systems transformations in health and early learning are built upon the belief that local community leaders are the best change agents we have. Together we are holding ourselves accountable for better understanding our community needs and working together to meet them.

The focus on developmental screenings has led to integrating early learning providers with health providers in Grant County. The local Community Advisory Council and the Frontier Early Learning Hub are coordinating in areas where coordination has not previously existed, for example, we recently collaborated to reach out to families and improve the ASQ screening rates and early intervention referrals in our county.

Strengthening early learning through the Hubs will benefit children, families and our region. I urge your support of SB 213.

Sincerely,



Linda Watson  
Children's Health and Community Coordinator  
Greater Oregon Behavioral Health Inc.