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SB 213: Early Learning Hubs

Senate Human Services and Early Childhood Committee

March 1, 2015

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

UCo Health is 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 has proven that investing early makes a tremendous impact on later life, not just in education, but in health too. UCo Health partners with the Early Learning Hub to ensure children have access to healthcare services, including immunizations. Physical health has an impact on children's academic performance and social/emotional/behavioral well-being. Early prevention is proven through evidence-based practices to reduce outcomes of chronic disease and illnesses.

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.

UCo Health and the Early Learning Hub are coordinating in areas where coordination has not previously existed. For example, UCo Health will provide a Wellness Center at the Pendleton Early Learning Center opening in fall 2015. The Early Learning Center will house numerous early childhood education services. The purpose of the Wellness Center is to promote healthy children and stabilize families while reducing the risk of chronic disease and unhealthy behaviors.

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

Sincerely,

Meghan DeBolt, Director